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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000d506>

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Enchanted Welfare

Islamic Imaginary and Giving to Strangers in Turkey

Hilal Zeybek

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political and
International Studies**

2013

DATE OF SUBMISSION : 28 MARCH 2012

DATE OF AWARD : 4 MARCH 2012

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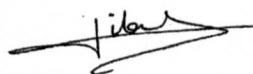
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ABSTRACT

This study explores welfare provision by non-state agents in contemporary Turkey. It analyses the phenomenon neither as an extension of the redistributive functions of the state nor as part of market mechanisms but through the theoretical lens of gift-giving. It argues that contractual relations of the market or the anonymity of redistribution fall short of acknowledging the personal, asymmetrical and religious formation of this field.

The welfare regime in Turkey is currently undergoing radical transformation, with provisions increasingly expressed within a gift-giving vocabulary. Waqf, the Islamic institution of endowment, plays an important role in this transformation. It provides both the institutional frame of operation and the imaginary signification that interpellates subjects to take part in these operations. Historically, waqf has been the main welfare provider in Muslim societies and has provided a legitimate source of social citizenship. Through its various features, it has shaped the enactments of citizenship throughout a vast geography. This research is also an endeavour to see how these historical features inform the present landscape of welfare provision in Turkey.

The research is built upon an extensive ethnography conducted in a central Anatolian city, with a booming industry and an Islamic outlook. The particular focus of this research, given its anthropological methodology, is the daily practices of various field actors. Instantiations of gift-giving characterize the majority of these practices—things, services, prayers, and recognition changing hands. Starting with this observation, the dissertation approaches gift-giving as a prominent mechanism in the field of welfare provision in Turkey. The significance of this paradigm is discussed vis-à-vis dominant political economic discourses, and the ethical and political potentials it brings forth are illustrated. This study is an invitation to have a fuller grasp of welfare provision as a hybrid field of social, political and ethical norms, behaviour and institutions.

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Acknowledgements

This work is the materialisation of my incurred debts to so many people that any acknowledgement would be insufficient. I can only rely on the assumption that they know that their gifts were heartily accepted and very much appreciated. Without the support of my supervisors Engin F. Işın and Umut Erel, this research project would not even have been possible. I have benefited from their intellectual, organisational and moral support for every curve along this path. Their professional congeniality has taught me the value of true mentorship. This thesis owes a debt to their generosity.

Open University Research School has supported this project with a full scholarship and provided a range of opportunities for intellectual and academic development. But most important of all, the university's vision and its foundational principles have gradually become a source of admiration for me. I am glad to be part of an institution which strives to make higher education more egalitarian and accessible. Two other institutions dedicated to making knowledge and thought common property are also deserving of my special thanks: the British Library in London and the Centre for Islamic Studies (İSAM) in Istanbul. Without the resources and study space these two institutions provided, this thesis could not have come to fruition.

Ethnographic research necessarily blurs the distinctions between research participants and friends. During my fieldwork in Kayseri I made some friends whose generosity and hospitality made vital contributions to my life and research. Perihan Altun, Leyla Ekiz, Ahmet Gümüş, Nuh Hasyüncü, Fatma Kayar and Pınar Akyurt, you taught me more than you could possibly have intended. I also thank all of the staff, volunteers and beneficiaries of Erciyes Feneri, Kayseri Darulaceze Vakfı and Melikgazi Vakfı, who let me work with them and answered my endless questions.

Although the PhD is known to be an isolating experience, with right kind of friends it can turn into a joyful quest. I am indebted to them all. Uli Beisel and Elena Vacchelli made trips to the British Library something to look forward to. Elena, also read parts of this dissertation and contributed valuable comments, which kick-started me back to work after a very long break. Banu Aydinoğlugil and Veysel Apaydın have always been true friends for hours of conversation, for taking jolly walks in London parks, and for laughing with till we burst. I truly miss every hour we have spent together. With Feyza Akınerdem and Esra Demir, we thankfully have a similar trajectory, so leaving London did not mean leaving them behind. This would have been heartbreaking. Dear friends Selma Altun, Billur Dokur, Simon Hutta, İrem İnceoğlu, Algin Saydar, Özlem Ünsal, Johanna Wadsley, Alex Wafer, Amy Watson, Besim Can Zırh and Çağda Zırh were always there in days of joy and sorrow. Çiğdem Esin and Kahraman Yadırgı offered us their lovely flat while we were waiting to move to Istanbul. With that being the worst winter London had experienced in decades, their hospitality saved us from breaking our necks on the streets. Lunch and tea breaks with the İSAM cohort made the final phases of writing bearable. Besides these more conventional interactions, a cosy email group has functioned as my lifeline during the last two years. Thanks to you all, *onbeşcanlar*: my beloved sisters Elif and Amine, dear friends Pınar, Alev, Burcu and Özge. My special thanks go to my lifelong friend Pınar Özgüner for her patience with me, as well as the crazy ideas, tete-a-tetes and encouragement, which has always been free-flowing.

I have presented the data and the ideas that appear in this thesis on numerous occasions. One such opportunity was particularly stimulating and productive: the Ethnographies of Islam Workshop held in London 4–6 November 2009. I thank Thomas Pierret, Paulo Pinto, Kathryn Spellman and Baudouin Dupret, the organizers of the workshop and the editors of the collection that followed, for their valuable comments and well-posed critiques.

Writing in a foreign language is never easy. In handling the problems associated with it I have always benefited from the rich vocabulary and paraphrasing skills of Alev Kuruoğlu and the diligent proofreading of Janine Su. I thank them both.

My father- and mother-in-law made our move back to Istanbul as smooth as possible with their endless logistic, financial and emotional support. I don't have enough words to thank them. Our dear neighbour Saliha Erkmén gave me the necessary space and time to focus and work on this dissertation with peace of mind by generously agreeing to look after our daughter Azade. And my own family, Mehmet, Nurten, Elif, Amine Seyhun, Abdullah Giray and Alperen Alkan, whom I have been missing for so many years now and who suffered most as a result of my never-ending education, cannot be thanked enough. They keep teaching me lessons of love and care.

Finally, Ozan, my love, my critic, my friend, and Azade, my sunshine: Seeing you walking, and playing, reading, singing and laughing together is the greatest joy of my life. I don't know how to give back the time I have stolen from you. I hope the final product, at least, is something you will be proud of.

Glossary of Turkish Words

Throughout the thesis the reader will come across to a number of Turkish words that are not translated to English, although at least some of them are routinely translated in other literature. These are words that are products of a very particular history, and that still carry the nuances they acquired during their historical trajectory. These words constitute the backbone of the thesis and the depth and richness of their meanings can not possibly be encompassed in a single word translation. Still, in order to guide the reader through the text I include brief explanations regarding the meaning of each word.

Hayır: From Arabic خير (khayr) which literally means ‘good’. This meaning is still valid in modern Turkish, however it also and more specifically describes good deeds, beneficence. This second meaning is referred to throughout the thesis.

Hayırsever: A compound word made up of hayır and sever, literally means ‘those who love beneficence’. In Turkish the word is often used to refer to philanthropists, wealthy benefactors who donate large sums to public welfare and education projects. Among this project’s research participants the term has a more nuanced meaning, one that emphasises to the conspicuousness of the projects supported by hayırsevers.

Hizmet: From Arabic خدمة (khidma), which literally means ‘service’. The meaning is unchanged in Turkish but often has a moral tone that extends over the act itself, referring to the person’s intentions.

Sadaka: From Arabic صدقة (sadaka), which is often translated into English as ‘charity’. In Turkish it means voluntary alms given to the poor. It has a religious meaning as the name of a specific and encouraged act of generosity. However, depending on the context it also has derogatory connotations because receiving sadaka may be demeaning to the poor.

Vakıf: From Arabic وقف (waqf), which literally means ‘halt, freeze’. In Islamic law it refers to an inalienable and perpetual religious endowment. The institution has more

than one thousand years of history, over which various practices and jurisprudence have affected its nature and functions. Still, for centuries it has been the main tool of welfare provision in Muslim societies. In contemporary Turkish it is a legal name given to a very particular form of institution that is still at least partially loyal to the original principles behind waqf. It is used by the research participants, though, as the generic name for all non-state initiatives which provide welfare services and distribute aid to the needy.

Vakıfçı: Vakıf+çı, literally ‘person involved with a vakıf’, however it is not in common usage in Turkish. Among research participants it is used to refer to people who do hands-on work for vakıfs and spend their time and energy in beneficence activities, regardless of whether they are involved with a vakıf or not.

Vakıfçılık: Vakıf+çı+lık, literally ‘involvement in vakıf activities’. It is not in common usage in Turkey.

Zekat: From Arabic زكاة (zakat or zakah), which literally means ‘that which purifies’. It is the obligatory annual Islamic tax on wealth.

All foreign words, including the ones listed above, are italicised only for the first time they appear in the text.

INTRODUCTION

The social welfare regime is under a radical reform in Turkey. State expenditures are on the rise and various welfare schemes are being integrated. These structural reforms and their short- and long-term effects have already been discussed in a number of publications (Buğra 2007; Buğra and Candaş 2011; Özdemir and Yücesan-Özdemir 2008; Aybars and Tsarouhas 2010). However, this transformation takes place not only on the material basis of welfare provision or its quantifiable aspects. At the same time, the discourse on welfare provision is changing. The government discourse has, for some time already, been transformed into a language of beneficence, presenting new or improved services in terms of care and beneficence. While enlarging the realm of intervention and extending its social functions and expenditures, the Turkish state, under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party), has refashioned social citizenship with a vocabulary of religious compassion and benevolence.

This transformation is reminiscent of the rise of so-called compassionate conservatism in the USA (Kutchins 2001; Carlson-Thies 2001; Cnaan and Boddie 2002; Morgan and Campbell 2011) and the changing role of faith-based organisations around Europe (G. Clarke 2006; Milligan and Conradson 2006). There are also studies that compare them with Middle Eastern welfare regimes (Pioppi 2004; Jawad 2009a; Jawad and Yakut-Cakar 2010; Karshenas and Moghadam 2009). I, too, find it important to properly situate the phenomenon among global trends of change in state-society relations;

however, I believe that each historical context provides different institutions and tools, whether discursive or practical, to initiate change. Moreover, because starting points differ significantly, even policies that have been copied directly have unique and indeterminable effects.

Within this context, I aim to situate welfare provision through beneficence with regard to state and market, and to develop an understanding of subject formations within this particular location. *This thesis is about the politics and ethics of welfare provision undertaken by citizens, whose daily work is marked by instantiations of gift-giving.* I acknowledge that making sharp delineations between welfare provision through state, market or civil actors is hard to maintain. Indeed, one of the objectives of this thesis is to illustrate the blurriness and porousness of these boundaries.

This porousness brings us to the first question of the thesis: How can beneficence be understood and conceptualized outside the dichotomous conceptualisations of state-market, state-civil society, and public-private? What are the self-understandings of beneficence actors regarding the nature of their acts? How do they manoeuvre between the state, their own social groups, colleagues and beneficiaries to articulate the aims of welfare provision? And how can our knowledge of social citizenship be affected by this perspective, which introduces beneficence not simply as a tool of social policy, but also as an important source of identity, meaning and morality?

The second set of questions follows the presumption that social acts do not take place in isolation; that social life itself is, if not determined, delimited by already-existing significations, institutions, structures and norms, and that it involves interaction.

Therefore, nobody can possibly act on his or her own. So, what are the key idioms of the language used by beneficence actors to define, explain, justify or refine their acts? What are the institutions they rely upon and refer to? And what of the social imaginary—which is a composite of these elements but which cannot be reduced to their sum—that proposes meanings for these acts as well as a road map for its subjects? Finally, what is the texture of the intersubjective realm that is built upon relations of gift?

Welfare provision by voluntary organisations has been a matter of academic and governmental interest in Europe and the USA for more than three decades. The last decade finally witnessed the increasing recognition of such work in Muslim contexts as well. Some of these studies are historical (Singer 2002; Bonner, Ener, and Singer 2003; Singer 2008; Heyneman 2004), while several others provide valuable insights on the issue of welfare provision by civil actors in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa. Before moving on to discuss the premises of this dissertation and to explore its research questions, I will provide a brief overview of selected examples from this literature.

Religiously Motivated Welfare Provision in the Middle East

In her study on social welfare and religion in the Middle East, which is mostly based on data from Lebanon with supplementary evidence coming from Egypt, Turkey and Iran, Jawad (2009), discusses the role religiously motivated and defined voluntary organisations play in the field of welfare provision. Her insights come from a social policy perspective and her emphasis is on recognising the importance of religion both as

an organising principle and as a source of motivation for provision activities. Jawad argues that in the Lebanese case, where the state is 'weak' and 'internal taxation and political citizenship have not provided the foundations for the welfare state' (p. 78), religion (including various sects of the Muslim, Christian and Druze faiths) is key to human well-being and social welfare. Jawad gathers evidence regarding the religious motivations of her informants, who shape the social policy scene in their respective countries, and concludes that social policy (the discipline) has to cast an eye to the moral value and pragmatic impact of religion. She frames the basic precept of her book this way: 'let us give RWOs the scope to coordinate with each other, with government personnel and crucially with international development institutions in a framework that can provide a common agenda for social policy' (ibid. 259).

Göçmen's (2011) study of religiously motivated welfare associations in Turkey works on the similar premise of the significance of religion in the field of social welfare provision. Yet she employs a political science approach, which is certainly less policy-oriented and prescriptive. She challenges the mainstream secularisation and modernisation paradigms that suggest an evolutionary view of society, in which religion would gradually disappear from public life, if not altogether. However, the value of her analysis does not stem from this much-voiced criticism but from her detailed investigation of the historical particularity of the relationship between state and religion in various country settings, and therefore from her objection to generalising explanations.

Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2009) also focus on the political context of welfare provision in the Muslim world, especially in the cases of disaster relief and

humanitarian aid. They conceptualise the political implications of these activities and argue that religious motivations should not be allowed to overshadow the political agenda that accompanies international relief provision of Muslim organisations. These organisations, just like Christian missionaries, are prominent political actors in the countries within which they operate. They effectively create and use vertical ties to enlarge their human base.

Janine Clark's (2004) work on Jordanian, Egyptian and Yemeni Islamic social institutions challenges this argument. The organisations she selected for her fieldwork have explicit connections with the Muslim Brotherhood, however, as she argues, their function is less one of recruiting the lower classes by providing them much-needed welfare services, than it is one of creating a sense of solidarity among the middle classes by offering them quality services in settings they can identify with. In that sense, religious welfare organisations exhibit the characteristics of social movements with their high impact on horizontal ties and relatively lower impact on vertical ties.

The issue of vertical ties linking the poor and the benevolent middle classes has long been a matter of debate among scholars of the Middle East. Religious welfare organisations are seen as nodes through which educated middle class Islamists approach the lower classes and recruit them for their political cause (see for example Zubaida 2001). The clientelistic ties between the poor and welfare providers are blamed for serving this function, and the providers' humanitarian aims are often suspected of being a cover for a hidden agenda (Flanigan 2010). A similar concern occasionally appears in the media debates concerning charitable organisations in Turkey. However, the core assumption of recruitment has never been truly tested in the Turkish context.

But in another setting, Egbert Harmsen (2008) takes on the task of testing and challenging this assertion. Harmsen's work on Jordanian welfare associations employs civil society as its core concept, not in an entirely celebratory way, discussing the status and function of these organisations in Jordanian society and in relation to the state. He approaches civil society 'as a realm that consciously organizes the socio-cultural lifeworld of citizens' (p. 33) and explores what kind of citizens are produced by religious welfare associations: dependent or empowered? His conclusions point to a mixture: He confirms Janine Clark's (2004) argument regarding the importance and prevalence of horizontal ties in such organisations but also agrees with Sami Zubaida (2001) that the relationship between clients and welfare workers is one of vertical patronage and paternalism, and it therefore has only limited empowering effect. He also tries to situate these organisations vis-à-vis the state, both as social policy tools and potential—but severely restricted—loci for resistance and opposition.

This dissertation benefits from the findings and analyses of these authors and aims to contribute to the emerging field of studies on welfare provision in non-European societies. As will be observed in the following chapters, Clark's (2004) emphasis on the significance of networks is supported by my own findings. I advance an argument that is only subtly made by Clark, though, suggesting that institutions of beneficence and non-state welfare provision rely on the gift circuits of the wealthy and the middle classes. I share Jawad's (2009) position vis-à-vis the importance of spirituality and religion in welfare provision both at the organisational and hands-on level, and give examples of elements of the religious imaginary that surround helping the needy in Turkey. However, in some important aspects, I go beyond these works. First, I adopt an

anthropological approach and aim to provide a thick description of practices. I hope that this contributes another, and perhaps valuable, perspective on studying welfare provision. Second, I do not only focus on religious aspects of welfare provision (whether in terms of motivations, political orientations or financial resources) but see gift-giving as a hybrid field of welfare provision. I shall discuss the first aspect a little later but let me discuss the second aspect briefly now.

This dissertation aims to avoid identifying welfare provision through beneficence with religion *only*, and singling out religiosity as a factor of primary importance. I rather see the interrelations between religious, political, social and cultural aspects of how the field of welfare provision actually operates. This does not imply downplaying the significance of religion; instead, as the dissertation proceeds, it will become clear to the reader that Islam (as believed and experienced by my research participants) provides many resources as well as reasons for those involved in beneficence activities. But whatever the initial intentions and reasons, an act of beneficence produces a multiplicity of outcomes. These outcomes are political, social and cultural, as well as religious and ethical. Similarly, multiple resources can be used to initiate an act. I approach religion as one of the many sources of action and discourse formation. Therefore, I recognize the fact that religious motivations play an undeniably important role in the phenomenon of welfare provision, but I also argue that over-emphasizing them has its own predicaments.

Theoretical and Methodological Choices

The theoretical and conceptual tools I use to address the research questions of this dissertation draw from the academic literature on *gift*. Gift literature is not bounded to a single discipline, and the concept, as well as gift practices, have so far attracted scholars from all disciplines of social sciences and humanities, ranging from philosophy (Derrida 1997; Jenkins 1998; O'Neill 2005; Hamington 2004) to law (Fennell 2002), nursing (Fox 1995) to political economy (Polanyi 1957). However, the great majority of these studies documenting gift practices, as well its local theorisations, come from anthropology (Gregory 1982; Parry 1986; Strathern 1990; Thomas 1991). Marcel Mauss (1990[1924]) was the first to make a comprehensive attempt to theorise gift, acknowledging it as a universal phenomenon. The anthropological discussion has evolved and taken many turns over the hundred years following the publication of *The Gift*. Since then, important interventions have been made to illustrate that the concept can productively be used to understand modern complex societies, and that its value is not limited to societies without market economies and money (Carrier 1995; Godbout and Caille 1998). In fact, as Carrier (1992) argued, limiting gift to so-called primitive societies means reproducing the Western self-illusion of rationality, intentionality and individualism, and is a case in point for Occidentalism.

When I talk about gift-giving, what I refer to is not limited to presents people hand out to each other on special occasions. Neither do I refer to the 'free gift' given for purely altruistic reasons, although this issue will be part of the discussion. This dissertation benefits from a broader understanding of gift, which roughly means any thing or service given without the expectation of an immediate and equal return, but always with an

expectation of acceptance. This definition highlights a number of important features of the gift. First of all, for a gift to be a gift it should be accepted and understood as such. Second, almost every gift creates an obligation of return. However, this return should be postponed, often to such an extent that the period between the initial gift-giving and its reciprocation becomes imponderable. Finally, the relation between gift and counter-gift is not one of material equality but of unquantifiable equivalence.

The combination of these features gives gift relations their unique durability, extended time span, flexibility and power to create bonds between people and groups. Because gifts create obligations—the obligation to accept and to return—they bind people together at least for the period during which the gift cycle is completed. However, the gift cycle is *never* complete, because counter gift-giving is also itself an act of gift-giving, thereby extending the cycle of obligation to accept and return. Hence, gift relies on an accumulation of gratitude, indebtedness and generosity; a reliance which makes it the fertilizer and catalyst of social ties. Gifts invoke honour as much as shame; they may be a source of solidarity as much as of competition and rivalry. They are tools of status or power play as well as means by which to show care and compassion. Tracing the circulation of gifts, observing the rituals that accompany acts of gift-giving and asking about the theory of gift in any given society—i.e. why people give gifts—provide valuable opportunities to explore social relations.

In the context of birthdays and special occasions, gifts are often things that you can live, and so far have lived, without. Nobody would feel desperately in need of a suede iPad sleeve, fancy jewellery or a T-shirt with an obscene remark on it. This narrow understanding has caused David J. Cheal to characterise gift with redundancy and

define 'the gift economy as a system of redundant transactions in a moral economy, which makes possible the extended reproduction of social relations' (1988, 19). However, a broader understanding of gift illuminates how we, human beings, are dependent on gifts for our very existence. Every act of care, from breastfeeding to taking care of a loved one during illness, from donating to a cause to giving a friend a lift, is a gift. Every unpaid service, from volunteering at a retirement home to offering to help a neighbour, is a gift. In the same vein, what is voluntarily given in order to meet somebody else's welfare needs is a gift. These gifts may well be the donations of wealthy benefactors, as well as the time spent by volunteers and caring gestures by employees. They are called, understood and framed as gifts by those who give them, sometimes explicitly, often by implication. They are given without the expectation of an immediate return, with uncertainty and always in a neatly prescribed manner. These gifts oblige many social norms and are subject to ethical assessments. They are borne out of religious commitments as much as citizenly attitudes, and are part of the habitus of the people who give and take them.

The gift framework serves both theoretical and methodological purposes in this dissertation. The theoretical contribution of the body of gift literature stems from its intervention into common understandings of political economy. The methodological benefits of this framework are related to the wide-angle lens it provides for viewing beneficence in a holistic manner, which includes looking at the institutions, discourse, benefactors, beneficiaries and intermediary actors simultaneously.

To develop this argument, I partially draw upon Karl Polanyi's (1957) political economy approach. Polanyi suggests that economies consist of redistributive, reciprocal

and commodity transaction mechanisms. Yet in every society the relevance and dominance of each element varies significantly. In our modern capitalist economies commodity transactions have acquired unprecedented dominance over other forms, but this does not mean the other two have become obsolete. Redistribution is now almost monopolized by states, although their capacity to delimit the realm of commodity transaction changes over time and place. Similarly, reciprocal relations still play a vital role in societal and individual well-being as the backbone of family relations, voluntary welfare provision and humanitarian aid. Taking up Polanyi's approach allows me to situate beneficence as an act of gift-giving right next to market relations and the redistributive faculties of the state, and to discuss how these three modes of meeting human needs differ in their primary logic while still coexisting because of the human capacity to shift seamlessly from one field to another.

In the academic literature, philanthropy has often been taken up with a focus on a) the motivations behind it, which often leads to analysing religious discourse and practices (see for example Wuthnow 1993; Martin 1994; Ostrower 1997), b) its societal organisation, hence looking at institutions (see for example Makdisi 1981; Bremner 1988; Bonner, Ener, and Singer 2003; Prochaska 2008) and c) its social functions, especially in creating hierarchies (see for example Harbaugh 1998; Ryan 2003; Clark 2004). Some authors also successfully incorporate all three of these dimensions. For example, Amy Singer's (2008) comprehensive work on charitable giving in Islamic societies lucidly explores the theological literature on the issue of charity, discusses how giving to the needy is organised among Muslims and illustrates how these particular forms of organisation are connected to prevailing social structures. In her study, we come across famous benefactors, waqf founders, Sultans and Grand Viziers who endow

educational facilities as well as soup kitchens. We also come across beneficiaries from all strata of their respective societies. In this sense Singer does not cut off her analysis by suggesting that the beneficiaries of such organisations were the needy. Instead, her detailed account shows how flexible and selectively inclusive has been the concept of 'beneficiary'. But even Singer's diligent work does not introduce the volunteers and employees of waqf institutions as actors worth focusing on, but she is not alone in this negligence. Studies on beneficence (or philanthropy or charity) consistently direct their interest towards the donors or receivers and assume a transparent and direct transfer of donations.

Certainly, the intermediary work of transferring what is donated to those in need is not completely absent from literature. Social work constitutes a significant and separate academic domain in itself, and the practice of social work has long been a matter of academic curiosity as well as a locus of policy intervention. This research project suggests that social work, as practised at institutions of beneficence can be understood within the same framework used to explore the discourses and practices of benefactors and beneficiaries, as well as institutions. This is the methodological value of the gift-paradigm.

Using the framework of gift makes it possible to examine motivations, practices and institutions at the same time, along with all three of the actors involved in social encounters of gift-giving. Looking at beneficence through the lens of gift is promising because it creates a chance to focus on the encounter, as well as the social relationships formed by these encounters. That is, it makes it possible to take a snapshot and analyse

where each person stands in this picture, and to record how these mechanisms maintain this relationship over the course of time.

Approaching the issue of beneficence with the framework of gift is productive in one more sense. It gives the researcher a chance to investigate the lexicon of beneficence shared by all parties involved in it, and that is used on occasions of gift exchange. This is particularly important because the idioms, phrases, words, prayers, gestures, expressions, and ceremonial practices that accompany giving and receiving tell us about rights, beliefs, religion, social hierarchies, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, social norms and traditions.

Religiously motivated beneficence is theorised as gift by a number of anthropologists and a few historians (Parry 1986; Rudner 1987; Werbner 1990; Silber 1995; Silber 1998; Peterman 1997; Laidlaw 2000; Kochuyt 2009; Osella and Osella 2009). Amy Singer (2008) briefly works on this connection in the context of Islam to suggest that although giving is a universal human trait, its particularity in different religious contexts should be acknowledged, because there is a lot we can learn about a particular sociality by looking at practices of giving. She deploys Mauss' formula of almsgiving: a shift from 'the ancient morality of the gift' to a 'principle of justice' (p. 10). She takes up this formulation and advances it to explore the ideas about justice and social order in Islamic societies.

Ilana Silber focuses on the 'great traditions', and investigates the explanatory value of the Maussian perspective for understanding the practices and morality of giving to the needy both in religion (1995) and in modern philanthropy (1998). She draws attention

to the paradoxical coexistence of disinterestedness and interestedness in gift-giving, and suggests that the theoretical prospects of the gift paradigm lie in this paradox (Silber 1998). In order to resolve the tension that stems from counterpoising self-interest against altruism, she argues that the Maussian point of view 'may grant that much of philanthropic giving is ultimately self-serving and may even be facilitated by a whole range of internal and external rewards ... and yet one may still consider it as a gift because it nevertheless also entails, simultaneously, an element of uncertainty and disinterestedness' (1998, 140).

In religious giving, gifts given to fellow human beings and religious institutions are eventually gifts given to God. In Silber's approach, this is the core idea around which particular 'gift theories' are formulated (Silber 1995). People give to be dear to God, to accrue merit and to advance their religion. In that sense this notion of giving almost always involves the idea of a return expected from God, however uncertain and indeterminable it is. However, there are also 'gift circuits', the material circulation of goods and services among people and institutions. In these circuits gifts establish tangible connections, lasting relationships and social networks. In gift circuits not only donations but prestige, social value and respect travel as well. If 'gift theory' is people's answer to the question of why they give, the 'gift circuit' is the materialisation of gifts. The distinction Silber makes between theory and circuit and the example she provides to illustrate the use of this distinction in her work on medieval European monasteries shifts attention from non-productive binary of interestedness versus disinterestedness towards the social imaginary and the institutional framework of gift-giving in any given setting.

Thierry Kochuyt (2009), works on the Maussian three-step gift mechanism—giving, accepting and returning—to approach Islamic almsgiving. He starts with the premise that the principle of reciprocity requires every actor involved in gift relations to assume the roles of both the giver and the receiver. He introduces one more protagonist to the formula of giving, accepting and receiving: the divine authority, who is the ultimate giver as well as the ultimate receiver. So, God gives and asks for the acceptance of his gifts. The believer accepts these gifts and obeys the obligation to return, not to God but to a fellow believer. This second believer accepts the gifts and thanks God, hence returns the gift by showing gratitude. This triadic relationship, according to Kochuyt, is key to creating solidarity among Muslims, as well as strengthening their faith in God, who is merciful and the giver of gifts. Kochuyt provides a formulaic description of voluntary and obligatory giving with religious motivations, which is beneficial for analysing some of the patterns that will be discussed in the following chapters. However, it is also important to remember that such a formula neglects the non-religious dimensions and implications of religiously motivated gift-exchange. I will use the research findings to clarify this point throughout the thesis.

Dissertation Structure

In Chapter 1, I develop a critique of the accounts that understand beneficence with reference only to state or market. In these studies, organised beneficence appears either as part of a state policy or as a by-product of market operations, which creep in to fill the void deliberately left by the state. I offer a set of analytical tools, borrowed from economic anthropology, to deconstruct the assumptions behind these approaches. I suggest that these accounts are built upon a particular ontological misconception—i.e.

homo economicus—and a conviction that contemporary societies are determined by market relations. In order to be able to see what this view hides from sight, we need to recognise that there are other modes of circulation which regulate how things and services change hands in any human collectivity. Redistribution and reciprocity are as prevalent as commodity exchange for understanding the economic aspects of society, and either may prove to be dominant over the other depending on the context. I contend that what defines the field of beneficence is reciprocal relations of gift-giving.

Recognising gift as the dominant mode of circulation for the field of beneficence has important implications. First of all, it means putting aside a contractual understanding and focusing on the larger time span of reciprocal relations, because gift is an open-ended relationship that resists immediacy of return. Its main function is establishing lasting bonds between people in a never-ending cycle of gift and counter-gift. So gift is more of a bond than a thing. Second, gift allows us to question the primacy of intentions and the free will of social agents because of its capacity for being voluntary and obligatory at the same time. Therefore, using gift as a conceptual tool to approach beneficence dislocates the self-interested, calculating and solipsistic individual who is the imagined protagonist of modern public life.

The final part of Chapter 1 outlines the basic premises of an Islamic economy, as one of the sources that informs beneficence actors in Turkey. After reviewing the literature to single out principles and injunctions I argue that many Islamic economists agree on an economic model, which, unlike mainstream neoclassical models, acknowledges gift-giving as an integral part of economy. This acknowledgement is based on a dual

understanding of human nature, which recognizes the selfish dimension, as in *homo economicus*, but which adds altruism to the equation.

Chapter 2 situates gift relations in an institutional setting. I start with the observation that the institution of waqf provides both the model and the imaginary signification of welfare provision in Turkey. In social science and humanities literature, waqf is widely translated as ‘Islamic endowment’, and refers to an institution that has played a vital role as the source and addressee of social citizenship in Muslim societies for more than a millennium. A waqf can, with some simplification, be defined as ‘the detention of the corpus from the ownership of any person, and the gift of its income either presently or in the future, to some charitable purpose’ (Dallal 2004, 13). In that sense, its closest affinities in the West are the institutions of the trust and the foundation. But the historical trajectory of waqf distinguishes it from its Western counterparts. Changing state structures and the experiences of colonisation and modernisation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries greatly impacted waqf institutions throughout the Islamic world and led to the dissolution of the intricate welfare system these institutions upheld in most parts of this geography. This chapter suggests that, while it has been subject to serious transformation, the institution persists as a disposition of both the state and citizens in Turkey. I illustrate this point by providing an overview of the historical significance of waqf and the role it plays in the welfare regime of Turkey.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of methodology and an introduction to the organisations with which I worked. The original data for this research project comes from nine months of ethnographic fieldwork in Kayseri, Turkey. During the fieldwork I did participant observation in a number of local charitable organisations. During these

months I had many opportunities to observe instantiations of gift-giving as they occurred, and I arrived at the conclusion that there are a multiplicity of gift circuits that maintain these organisations and their wider networks. Therefore, the subject matter of this dissertation is not only the donations of the benefactors, i.e. the gifts that travel *from the wealthy towards the needy*. I argue that the main source of funding for these organisations comes from gift circuits *among the wealthy*, i.e. their gifts and favours to and for each other. So gifts (in the form of donations and favours) are not unidirectional; on the contrary, they flow in circular patterns within the networks of wealthy men and women. Yet, at another level are gift relationships of the workers and volunteers of these organisations with the beneficiaries. Exploration of these gift instances, their key terms and shared ceremonies make up a substantial part of the dissertation. Beneficiaries' participation and role in gift-giving is also discussed within the limits of my observations. This chapter is an attempt to reflect on the methodological choices that made this research what it is.

Chapter 4 is a description of the location of the research, Kayseri and the philanthropists of the city, who are eager to represent their endeavours as a local legacy. Kayseri, an Anatolian city home to almost one million people, has been chosen for this research project for two reasons. First, in the last couple of decades, Kayseri's booming export industries have led to an accumulation of unprecedented wealth in the hands of a number of local businessmen. This success in industry has attracted interest in Western media and scholarship, and has turned Kayseri into an exemplary case to be studied in order to understand the dynamics of the interplay between Islam and capitalism. However, there are problematic issues in these studies, which I highlight and critique in Chapter 4. Second, Kayseri has a significant tradition of giving to their city, which is

claimed by town notables to be a component of local identity. The Kayseri cityscape is dotted with buildings endowed for public use. There are also a large number of organisations providing a wide array of welfare services and assistance to the poor. Both the number of such organisations and the scope of their activities make it an exceptionally suitable place to conduct this type of research.

The second half of the chapter focuses on Kayseri's philanthropists, who make these endowments and financially support the organisations of interest. I conceptualise these endowments and donations as acts of gift-giving and explore the sources of obligation to which wealthy local entrepreneurs respond by investing heavily in beneficence. Material from the interviews I conducted with notable town philanthropists is analysed to draw conclusions about their manifest objectives and reasons. The overall argument of the chapter speaks to the theory of gift I develop in Chapter 1 by suggesting that obligation to give lies neither in religion per se nor in self-interested economic calculations, but in the regulative principle of the field of beneficence, which is gift-giving.

Chapter 5 continues with explorations of instances of gift-giving, this time in the daily practices of vakıf workers. The chapter is built around the concept of *hizmet*, which literally means 'service' but has broader religious and non-religious connotations. It is an umbrella term that refers to any act which involves caring for strangers, whether it is done in public settings or by private initiative. I argue that *hizmet* provides Kayseri beneficence field actors with a theory of gift, and thus gives their acts their meaning and spirit. It also provides the discursive tools for creating collaborations which otherwise would seem suspect, and it allows actors to frame their daily activities as gift acts.

Throughout the chapter, I investigate how labour, donations, prayers and the formation of networks come to be instantiations of gift-giving by contrasting them against commodity transactions with a similar outlook. Therefore, alongside the theory of gift-giving, the chapter also expands on the material circuits of gift.

Chapter 6 explores how relationality informs notions of justice among vakıf workers. The focus of the chapter is on encounters between vakıf workers and supplicants. Most of these encounters take place during the application and assessment processes, when the entitled vakıf workers evaluate cases based on certain criteria. This evaluation procedure often involves visits to supplicants' homes, where surveillance of life standards may lead to intimate connections as well as judgement and criticism. These are also occasions for the determination of needs. The chapter is woven around the theme of how certain needs are viewed to be worthy of entitlements, and how the criteria are used flexibly to justify decisions. I suggest that invocations of justice, not as normative phenomena but as part of a person's ethical standing (in terms of being a just person), open up the possibility of circumventing these criteria, however well entrenched they first appear to be.

Chapter 7 intertwines diverse theoretical strands to illustrate the subjective formations of vakıf workers, especially of women. I suggest that, while doing vakıf work, women experience a transformation which starts with their embodied dispositions towards poverty. Their boundaries shift during repeated encounters, and this shift makes up the core of their ethical formations. I argue that, although the point of departure of engagement with vakıf work is often formulated in religious terms, it includes a broader commitment to an ethics of care. This ethics is necessarily built on the practice of care

and is intersubjective, for care acts involve at least two people. The final part of the chapter looks into the affinity between care and gift, and investigates how gift mechanisms can be masterfully used to constitute mutual respect.

The concluding chapter picks up from there and discusses the conditions of building respect in relations of unequal power and standing. It argues that the principles that govern gift-giving have a significant effect on this task, as much as they have explanatory value. With reference to the theoretical problems posed in Chapter 1, this brings the discussion back to the realm of political economy and queries the role of reciprocal relations in the face of ostensible neoliberalisation.

A note on the choice of terminology

Throughout this dissertation I prefer using *benefaction* and *beneficence*, often interchangeably, to denote the acts of founding and donating to organisations, as well as the daily activities of those who work for these organisations, whether paid or unpaid, all expressed in Turkish with an Arabic word, *hayır*. Such a choice is better justified by comparing these terms with the commonly preferred terminology in the literature: philanthropy, charity and benevolence.

The reason for not using *benevolence* is that because it signifies a disposition instead of an act or a practice. Why I deliberately refrain (though not always, as will be seen) from naming what I have observed *philanthropy* or *charity* is slightly more complicated, and has to do with the etymology and historical trajectory of the words. Philanthropy means the love of humankind and implies a certain reasoning and motivation behind the act of giving it signifies. This ancient Greek term was revitalised during the Enlightenment

and came to be used to refer to attempts to heal social ills programmatically and using reason (Gross 2002). From the very start of the second life of the term, it was deliberately distinguished from charity. In addition to faith in reason and greater ambitions to heal social ills rather than individual suffering, the term separated itself from charity with its secular connotations. In philanthropy the motivation behind giving does not have to be religious; it is worldly and has more to do with people than with God. Charity, on the other hand, has strong religious connotations. In the English language it describes both a Godly virtue and the practice of giving to the needy (Gross 2002). It is highly valued in Christianity and is still widely used by Christian groups to define their acts. One further complication with the use of charity is that it is the official title of non-profit organisations in the UK.

My task is to express, *hayır*, a word of a different historical background, etymology and cultural connotations, in a language—English—whose repertoire of words reflect historical tensions that are not directly applicable to the Turkish usage of the original Arabic word. Because *hayır* is neither solely religious nor secular, and because it defies the particular institutionalisation of both charity and philanthropy in the West, I prefer the literal translation (good deeds), and thus beneficence and benefaction.

Still, readers will notice some usages of the words charity and philanthropist. I reserve charity for the translation of the name given to a very particular form of religious giving, *sadaka* in Turkish (again from Arabic); which means ‘alms’ in the strictest sense, but is more widely used now to connote voluntary giving to the poor or destitute. Philanthropist is used as the rough translation of the Turkish term *hayırsever*. What *hayırsever* connotes is a matter of lengthy discussion (see Chapters 4 and 7). Here, it is

enough to note that hayırsever is translated as philanthropist, not according to any etymological reasoning but because of the material similarity of the two: wealthy people donating for a public cause.

Another note should be made regarding my preference to name the organisations that are the subject matter of this dissertation. In the literature, similar organisations in Turkey and in the region are described as ‘Islamic social institutions’ (Clark 2004), ‘Muslim voluntary welfare organisations’ (Harmsen 2008), ‘religious welfare organisations’ (Jawad 2007; 2009), and ‘religiously motivated welfare associations’ (Göçmen 2011). In Kayseri, the preferred vernacular name is *vakıf*, from the Arabic waqf. Throughout this dissertation I prefer using the vernacular name instead of coming up with a new term or employing one of the above. However, I also use the original Arabic word, waqf, to denote the historical institution as a whole, rather than a particular contemporary organisation. I adopt this strategy because the Arabic transliteration is more common in the literature and has wider implications than the Turkish legal concept of vakıf. In Chapter 2, I discuss the concept and the institution of waqf, and the significance of the particular vernacular usage of the word. In Chapter 3, I provide an outline of the common characteristics of the organisations I worked with. This outline also addresses my reservations about using the terms coined elsewhere in the literature mentioned above.

CHAPTER 1 THE CHALLENGE OF GIFT: RETHINKING POLITICAL ECONOMY OF WELFARE

This chapter begins with a critique of widely held beliefs about capitalism. The Marxist legacy of the inevitability of capitalist expansion is alive and well today. It is commonplace to talk about the overriding powers of capitalism and their permeation into the capillaries of societies. Capitalism, in all its fatalistic and deterministic narratives, cast man as *homo economicus*: a rational human being whose sole purpose is to further his own self-interests. Such a conception leaves room for exchange only insofar as it maximizes gain. Exchange is thus restricted to the realm of impersonal, gain-oriented commodity exchange, where labour and affection are predetermined and quantifiable aspects of ‘value’.

This narrative overrides the multitude of alternative modalities that do not have nearly as strong a voice as ‘Capitalism’. In order to extract these modalities from where they have been buried, I follow authors who have challenged the inevitability of capitalist expansion and argued that capitalism is neither as coherent nor as unified as it has been represented. Economic and livelihood activities in any given society can better be represented through a wide array of practices that conflict, co-operate or independently co-exist with each other. Among them, the exchange of goods and services can be

classified under the anthropological categories of commodity exchange, redistribution and reciprocity.

Reciprocal practices and relations are the most overlooked of the three, especially in the context of contemporary Western societies. This is symptomatic of an Orientalist and simultaneously Occidental bias (Carrier 1992), but also indicative of two founding assumptions: the assumption of *homo economicus* and the assumption of the primacy of markets. After laying out the fundamental elements of these two assumptions and deconstructing them to a degree, I move to expound on the missing reciprocal element: the gift.

In the final part of the chapter, given the importance of religion in the context I have conducted this research, I explore the terms with which scholars of Islamic economy define the boundaries of the economic sphere, and suggest that this school of economic thought approaches gift-giving as an integral and essential element of economy.

This Thing Called Capitalism

There is a widely accepted view among today's social scientists that capitalism is indeed marching forward to encompass all realms of society. This legacy of Marx taints discussions about almost any contemporary phenomenon, not only of political economy. Capitalism is tightening its grip, subsuming societies and transforming every place into copies of itself. The only remaining guarantee against this threat appears to be the state.

Conceptualised as an enemy to be fought by the institutions of welfare states, capitalism in this view appears as a coherent whole. It is either capitalism as the base (as in the well-known architectural metaphor) or the dichotomy of a state-versus-capitalism conflict that determines the societal structure. What I want to underline, as a background to this dissertation, is that no system is ever complete, nor does one system present a singular social reality. All systems operate partially and intermittently alongside of different codes and moral principles. Capitalism is said to have been taking over all other social realms for the last two centuries, and we revive the same anticipation with every new wave of capitalist re-structuring. Yet there has always emerged a new frontier for its expansion. Perhaps we should conclude that capitalist consolidation will never be absolute because, as Polanyi (1957) reminds us, society is not as accessible as initially thought. Society defends itself. At every step, we witness competing structures, practices, motivations, and relations, and they co-exist—not necessarily as latent structures of commodity exchange.

J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006) discusses specifics of these various activities that co-exist in today's societies as 'diversity economies'. Diversity economies range from theft to donations, from unpaid family labour to co-operatives, and from barter to volunteering, to name only a few. Some of these economic (or livelihood) activities are situated in tandem with capitalist rationale while others have completely different and almost incommensurable underlying principles. Yet these are either largely neglected by political economists or seen as complementary to capitalist organisation of production and consumption. What is at stake here is dismissing potential and already existing alternatives by presenting social systems as coherent structures with an inherently consistent logic.

According to Gibson-Graham, the discursive strength of Capitalism (with a big C), as opposed to capitalism as *a* mode of production among many, rests on three features that are widely attributed to it: unity, singularity and totality. Capitalism is described as a unified 'system' with an inner energy that allows it to ever expand and to recover from crises it creates. Instead of being a loose patchwork of various practices it is represented as having a coherent inner logic, a predetermined aim, and a direction. It is also represented as being singular, in the sense that wherever it emerges all other possibilities and alternatives tend to disappear. It doesn't tolerate co-existence; either everything is Capitalism or there isn't capitalism. What is obviously non-capitalist (not yet capitalist) is then either destined to dissolve (for example, subsistence agriculture) or to be classified as reproducing capitalism (like women's unpaid housework). Finally, Capitalism appears by and large to be a total system, swallowing whatever crosses its path that may be called human, either social or personal. There is then nothing surprising in the notion that such an all-powerful, self-identical, dynamic, and self-explanatory system would be almost unbeatable.

In such thinking, which indeed dominates our imaginative and discursive repertoires nowadays, partialities are transformed into allegedly anachronistic practices. Such a view posits one set of relations as the primary determinant of the social life, and then lines up all other phenomena in relation to it, and notably behind it. As Gibson-Graham puts it '[n]oncapitalism is the before or the after of capitalism: it appears as a precapitalist mode of production (identified by its fate of inevitable supersession); it appears as socialism for which capitalism is both the negative and positive precondition' (ibid., 7).

It is not to underestimate the power of the patchwork of practices assembled under the name 'capitalism' through which so many things (land and labour being the most important) have become commodified and been turned into objects of a never-ending trade. These practices and their rationalities permeate many forms of existence on the planet in one way or another. Rather than taking these practices lightly, I suggest confronting the hegemonic discourse that takes these practices as a coherent whole and that constructs capitalism as a swelling monster. My objective is to produce an account that looks for other practices, other incentives, and moral principles while keeping their relationship to capitalism in mind. I try to identify spheres that could indicate more than just another example of capitalism or another facet of the capitalist enterprise. Because capitalism is not an all-encompassing system, one does not have to be a time-traveller or an out-of-context saintly figure to act outside its rationale. On the contrary, acts that openly contradict or challenge capitalist principles may well be performed by actors who otherwise could be seen as exemplary members of a market society. The actors of beneficence who are the subject of this dissertation will provide enough examples to make this point over the course of the thesis.

Homo economicus

At the heart of totalised conceptions of capitalism lies an ontological simplification of man as an economic animal guided by self-interest and profit maximisation. It is important to briefly look at this particular genus, homo economicus, because it seriously affects the way we think about why people do certain things. It is the reason gift-giving, beneficence, and care seem either impossible or calculated. Or worse, they cannot be noticed and recognised at all.

The idea of homo economicus is based on a particular understanding of the defining values of societies and human beings, along with the main functions of human relations. To begin with, the underpinnings of human encounters are assumed to consist of an exchange of things in order that individuals can make gains and profits. Adam Smith, for example, suggested that the division of labour, as the function upon which societies were first built, was dependent upon the existence of markets, that is, upon 'man's propensity to barter, truck and exchange one thing for another' (1863). In short, societies, starting with the so-called primitives, are made up of bartering individuals, and these individuals come together for the sake of exchange. Their propensity to maximise their interests leads them towards each other. Hence society is itself a product of this selfish drive.

According to David Williams (1999), Adam Smith's homo economicus, while posited as the universal reality of man, was actually a project to be realised in order to meet the human needs of the changing economy. Such a project 'required locating individuals in new institutional arrangements and inculcating new habits' (p. 89). Individuals were expected to enhance their wealth through economic actions instead of being idle or spending their money on activities with no economic gain. Homo economicus, as a project, was designed to create a new self, who was supposed to be 'disengaged and autonomous (freed from negative and dangerous social customs), innovative and reflexive (using a systematic approach for problem solving) and calculating (through functionary numeracy and accounting techniques)' (p. 95).

Indeed, this calculating and interest-oriented subject finds itself relatively well-located in markets and commodity exchange, but only in markets. Taking homo economicus as

the essence of Man is imagining society as ruled by markets to the exclusion of other forms of subsistence. Anthropological traditions illustrate quite a variety of economic or livelihood activities that shape how things and services change hands in human groups. Commodity exchange is only one form among others; its institutionalisation through markets is hardly universal, and its absence should not be viewed as an aberration. To quote Polanyi:

Adam Smith's suggestions about the economic psychology of early man were as false as Rousseau's were on the political psychology of the savage ... While history and ethnography know of various kinds of economies, most of them comprising the institution of markets, they know of no economy prior to our own, even approximately controlled and regulated by markets. (1957, 44)

Polanyi emphasises that the historical and spatial universality of the reign of markets is a myth created in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, he too describes markets as expanding towards an ultimate domination. With that, his account repeats the same line of representation—that markets have come to a point where they will have finally taken over the key institutions of the society in an incomparable manner to previous ages. Still, he recognises by implication of decentring and historicising markets that there are other possible and well-established ways of circulating things and services in societies. He also acknowledges that, despite its dominance, commodity exchange was not the only form available in 1944 when *The Great Transformation* was published. Nor is it now.

By the same token, despite its discursive power, homo economicus as a project is still far from being realised. People act with motivations other than money and with rationales other than making profit over exchange. In the following section, I will situate commodity exchange within an anthropological model, and explore its co-existence and interrelation with two other forms of circulation.

Commodity exchange and redistribution

As much as homo economicus is the ontological assumption behind the overpowering view of capitalism and market economy, the predominant form of transaction within this ideal type is commodity exchange. Thus, this very particular type of economic activity lies at the heart of the ready-made explanations discussed above.

Our obsession with markets is historically contingent. Anthropological traditions delineate three distinct forms of circulation: reciprocity, redistribution and commodity exchange (Polanyi 1957; Dalton 1965; Lomnitz 1988). Reciprocal relations include gifts, collective labour, household activities, and so on. Redistribution is the pooling of resources and their return to members of the society at different rates. It is often thought of together with the centralisation of power, whether in the form of bureaucratic states or less complex chiefdoms. Finally, commodity exchange is the exchange of goods or services with immediate return or with the promise of a definite return. All three forms often co-exist in societies, serving different needs, and having distinct cultural functions. The predominance of one system or another in a particular society varies greatly; there are societies in which markets have almost negligible eminence (Mauss 1990[1924]), and there are others in which the accumulation of power through redistribution is kept under strict control (Graeber 2004). There are others, still, in which markets have achieved unprecedented importance and reach, yet even in this case the other forms will not have ceased to exist. Quite the contrary, redistribution and reciprocity play an important role, even in the existence of capitalism itself.

Kojin Karatani (2008) has developed a critique of the architectural model of base-superstructure in traditional Marxist thinking and suggests using another Marxian concept, exchange, to understand how societies function, in terms of both economy and power. He identifies four modes of exchange, three of which are the familiar reciprocity, plunder/redistribution, commodity exchange, and the fourth, X, which is a regulative ideal to guide aspirations for a just and peaceful future. According to Karatani, reciprocity, redistribution and commodity exchange exist within every society in different combinations. It is therefore quite inadequate to focus only on market relations in order to understand modern societies. 'Capitalist social formation', as Karatani calls it, requires more than simply relations of production that turn human labour into commodity, namely particular modes of redistribution and reciprocity. In today's 'capitalist social formation', redistribution is equal to the state, whereas reciprocity is realised through the imagined community of the nation. With this turn, 'capital-nation-states' accumulate the endurance to fight off any attempts at deconstruction through selective attacks against relations of production and exchange. In Karatani's thinking, 'capital-nation-states ... were best represented by social welfare nations' (p. 587) and that is why overcoming capitalism requires simultaneously overthrowing nations and states, the pillars of capitalism.

Tellingly, T.H. Marshall had started his quest with a similar problematic: What is the relationship between modern states and capitalism? In *Citizenship and Social Class* (1992), Marshall argues that citizenship, as a system of equality at the foundation of modern states, and capitalism, as a system of inequality, are oppositional. Yet curiously enough, they have flourished simultaneously over the last 250 years of Western history. This co-existence creates a paradox to be resolved, given the contradictory nature of the

two systems. In order to resolve it, Marshall analyses the history of citizenship in its three phases, each of which emphasises a different aspect: civil, political and social citizenship.

According to Marshall, during the first phase of citizenship in England civil rights were seen as the core of the citizenship ideal, and the right to own property and the right to sell one's labour began to be protected under law. The abolishment of the old status-based system of access to these rights allowed all citizens to act freely within the market. The two conditions for the emergence of capitalism were thus met: the right to work (in the Marxian terminology, free labour) and legal protection of private property that could be translated into capital through the changing relations of production. The inequalities, which lacked a legal definition yet at the same time were constituted by these two core elements of law, only later began to be seen as potentially incompatible to the premise of equality. This corresponds to the second phase of the development of modern citizenship, the establishment of political rights. By the end of the nineteenth century, unions began to comprehend the political power they had acquired through the extension of political rights to all citizens, and to use this power to fight the material outcomes of the inequalities capitalism had been producing. According to Marshall, with the upper classes beginning to develop a wider understanding of citizenship as being 'admitted to a share in the social heritage' (1992, 6), social rights appeared as an issue of hot debate in the twentieth century.

Hence, Marshall approaches social rights and the redistributive faculties of the state as a means of protecting social order ('the capitalist social formation', to paraphrase Karatani) in the face of the threats from the working classes. Marshall's account is

explicit in its spatial and temporal account—that this is the history of citizenship in England, and not intended to imply universal applicability. But it is still indicative of how states, seen as the sole redistributive agents and legitimate sources of citizenly rights, can also be seen as what made capitalism possible in the first instance, as well as what effectively kept it functioning afterwards.

The idea of social citizenship has recently been revived and is being discussed in the Turkish context. During the last decade, academic discussions of the issue have been led by two prominent scholars: Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder. In her book, Buğra develops a historical view to analyse the changing ‘welfare regime’ of the Turkish Republic from its foundation in 1923 onwards (Buğra 2008). Her account is built upon the conviction that the idea of social citizenship poses a real threat and challenge to capitalism. This challenge is based on the fundamental contradiction between human conceptions of capitalism and citizenship. According to Buğra, from the sixteenth century onwards capitalism has caused a drastic change in the conception of human value, which lies in its ability to labour (*ibid.*, 23–49). In this worldview, poverty is a matter of a lack of ability or willingness to work on the part of the poor, and is therefore despised. It appears as a matter of regulation/alleviation, as it is a problem of sustaining ‘productive hands’. In contrast to this conception of humanity, rights-based discourses claim that basic human needs should be met for all, not for their productive qualities, but because everyone has the right to survive with dignity. At this point Buğra refers to Marshall’s definition of full realisation of citizenship and argues that it is the responsibility of the state to guarantee this right (Buğra and Keyder 2006; Buğra 2008).

After making this fundamental distinction between the human conceptions of capitalism and rights-based discourses, Buğra moves on to identify the counterparts of these two conceptions in today's political arena. As the heir of economic liberalism, today's good governance schemes are the carriers of the first approach. The focus is on creating employment as a solution to poverty and cooperating with NGOs to lessen the burden of the state. Benefaction is the integral last resort in this approach, to be mobilised and used when all possibilities of abusing the productive capacities of the poor are consumed. Therefore, according to Buğra, this neoliberal understanding of good governance is an indirect version of transferring the problem of poverty to the realm of the market by minimising state responsibilities. In contrast, approaches of social citizenship prioritise the well-being of the society over the well-being of the market and consider poverty as a political problem. And as a political problem, the solution to poverty cannot be left to individual consciences and to the operations of the market, but must instead be dealt with by the state as a matter of citizenship rights and equality.

However critical and important is this analysis, it misses an important dimension of society and economy, and thus is profoundly flawed. Its weakness stems precisely from the dichotomy it assumes. By situating the market and the state as the only possible actors to provide social services, this account renders invisible mechanisms of circulation that are not necessarily ruled by the operations of the market or by redistributive mechanisms owned by the state. Second, it only acknowledges one legitimate source of rights: the state. Any right that is not recognised, legitimised and legally protected by a state does not count as a right in itself. So in this account, benefaction and other sorts of reciprocal relations are conflated with the market and the idea that the state can—and indeed does—act within terms of gift-giving is dismissed.

Some accounts of the 'mixed economy of welfare' effectively include the voluntary sector into the welfare mix in question (for example Bode 2006). However, even in such accounts, the governance perspective (for example Jessop 1999) shifts the narrative in statist directions, and voluntary sector actors (as the name suggests) are portrayed as quasi-market agents to be governed by the state. Therefore states function as managers (J. Clarke and Newman 1997) responsible for coordinating various actors, channelling resources and controlling outcomes. Especially in cases where non-profit welfare providers are funded by public offices (like the borough councils in the UK), the boundary between the voluntary sector and the state, as well as that between non-profit and for-profit organisations, is blurred. However in the Turkish case, there is almost no public funding available to welfare-providing NGOs, and their operations are hardly coordinated and directed towards state social policy goals, although this cooperation is always an aspiration.

Esping-Andersen's (1990) seminal work on welfare regimes may be illuminating at this point. Although his ideal types have been subject to some criticism (see the review of criticism in Arts and Gelissen 2002), the scales he uses to evaluate European welfare regimes have been widely applauded. Two of these scales are directly related to the discussion here: decommodification and defamiliarisation. Defamiliarisation is the degree to which the market and/or the state play a role in providing services to individuals that were traditionally provided by the family. Decommodification, on the other hand, is the degree to which social services are rendered by the state as a matter of rights, therefore creating the conditions for a person to maintain a livelihood without having to sell his or her labour. Then, defamiliarisation is a move from the reciprocal realm to the realms of redistribution and commodity exchange, while

decommodification is a shift from market relations towards the redistributive capacities of the state. The social democratic welfare regime, which is what stands for the common understanding of the welfare state when the retreat of the state or welfare crisis is mentioned, scored high on both of these scales. In other words, social democratic welfare regimes are characterised by the hollowing out of reciprocal responsibilities in the provision of welfare and a rights-based safety net that guarantees a basic life standard without dependence on the labour market. Buğra and Keyder's (2006) account, mentioned above, illustrate a yearning for such a complete transfer, and their distaste for gift-giving as welfare provision stems from fear of regress.

The Gift

As I have discussed in the introduction, the importance of understanding 'gift' for this research is twofold: first, it allows us to elaborate on charitable giving and beneficence beyond the limitations of state versus market, and on redistribution versus commercial exchange dichotomies; second, looking through the lens of the gift requires shifting the scale and scope of analysis to everyday relations amongst people because, as is made clear below, gift is always an enactment of a social role, an expression of indebtedness or an attempt to create a bond. Therefore, using this conceptual tool allows for looking at practices and the formation of subjectivities, both of which are outside the conceptual limits of political economy or idealistic/status-based conceptions of citizenship. So gift provides a set of conceptual tools that exposes enactments of citizenship as temporally and spatially located happenings *in situ*.

Within this context, gift-giving is not conceptualised as a private act actualised between two individuals out of pure generosity, affection or personal affiliation. Rather it is seen as a political act that sets the scene in which the encounters between citizens and their states and fellow citizens are structured and made meaningful. An influential and significant exploration of this topic comes from one of the forefathers of the British welfare system, Richard Titmuss. In *The Gift Relationship* (1997), Titmuss argues that voluntary giving for fellow citizens is beneficial to the social fabric and constitutive of increased levels of belonging. Moreover it is also more effective than the market for the provision of certain services. He then gives the famous example of blood donation, illustrating how blood supply decreases in proportion with its commodification, increasing when it is framed as a voluntary act of gift-giving. It is important to note here that what he describes is not only a case for the superiority of gift mechanisms over market processes with respect to the provision of certain services, but also evidence that for the provision of some services, non-obligation proves more effective than obligation.

Titmuss approaches this kind of gift-giving as a modern phenomenon and argues that it diverges drastically from Maussian principles, because it is essentially gift-giving to strangers, with whom there are no interactions, let alone true relationships, and because there can be no return gift due to the anonymous character of the initial gift. This dissertation can be read as an attempt to challenge these two arguments regarding the nature of giving to strangers. Throughout the coming chapters it will become clear that even making an anonymous donation to an organisation sparks spirals of gift-giving, most of which creates tangible relations among people. Before moving on with these discussions, however, a clarification of the Maussian formula is required.

Mauss' gift

Marcel Mauss wrote the first comprehensive account of gift-giving practices over a vast geographical and historical expanse, in which he traced patterns of what he identified as 'universality' in the gift. In the famous *The Gift* (1990[1924]), he identified reciprocity as a fundamental feature of gift-giving practices. According to him, the obligation to give, receive and reciprocate is the backbone of society. In doing so, people stay in relationships and act out friendship, partnership, hostility, cooperation, honour, war and diplomacy. Therefore the obligatory nature of gift relationships is an answer he provided to his tutor and uncle Emile Durkheim's famous question of what makes society possible, what makes it stick together. For Mauss, one possible glue is the gift.

In his conclusion to *The Gift*, Mauss draws moral, politico-economic and societal lessons for today's societies from his vast study of the gift. The range of conclusions drawn matches the concept of the 'total social system', as he coins the term for gift. According to him, gift is a total social phenomenon, with its legal, economic, religious, kinship, moral, and aesthetic dimensions. Gift effects all possible arenas of human transaction. This has been so for societies without a money economy, as well as for modern Western societies wherein commodity transactions set the norm of exchange. Mauss cites examples from the early-twentieth-century art scene, from labour movements, from newly establishing the idea of social welfare, and from conspicuous non-utilitarian consumption of the wealthy to make his point that gift is not an archaic phenomenon. There is a lot we can learn in terms of 'civility' (Mauss 1990, 83) through an exploration of gift-giving with respect to the art of living together.

Mauss puts an effort into drawing a moral conclusion that speaks to political economy as well as sociology. Because, as a 'socialist without a doctrine' (Insel 2003), his aim is to open up possibilities of thinking beyond the dichotomies of state versus market, individual versus society. By introducing the reciprocal voluntariness of subjects in the circulation of goods and services, *gift* challenges the idea that distribution and redistribution in societies with money economies are regulated either by the market or the state. This is also a challenge to the prevailing conception of calculative, interest-run, selfish man: homo economicus. According to Mauss, although 'it is our western societies who have recently made man an 'economic animal' ... we are not yet all creatures of this genus.' (1990,76). This is revealed in the fact that nearly every aspect of our lives is still deeply involved in gift economies. So, for Mauss, gift is what we can stick to in order to keep hope alive for a more humane world.

This particular political agenda has found its way into many of the later texts on the gift; even when not employed in the same way, it has always been a source of inspiration for imagining a world other than this one. For Pierre Bourdieu, studying the logic of gift is a critical task 'in order to create universes in which, as in gift economies, people have an interest in disinterestedness and generosity, or, rather, are durably disposed to respect these universally respected forms of respect for the universal' (Bourdieu 1997a, 240). For Godbout and Caille (1998) and for other members of the MAUSS (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales) initiative in France, gift is an important tool to pose a critique of utilitarianism that dominated social sciences. For anarchist anthropologist Graeber (2004), gift economies are where we can look for real-life examples of self-regulating socio-economic systems that escape the control of the state but still function efficiently, being based on an obligatory voluntariness. Recently, gift

has been taken up by new social movements to challenge the market accumulation system in the US and Europe, and has been offered as the most viable alternative to capitalist and expansionist money economies (Eisenstein 2011). For radical feminist Hélène Cixous (1996), principles of gift sketch out the principles of a possible feminine economy of care and generosity, as opposed to the masculine economy of self-interestedness, profit-seeking and aggressiveness. Similarly, the articles in Genevieve Vaughan's (2007) collection on gift economies discuss the possibility of creating a new economy built on the feminine qualities of giving and care. For Komter, gift and social solidarity thought of together offer potential opportunities to develop 'a new social connectedness, allowing the autochthonous and the allochthonous to live together in harmony and mutual respect' (2005, 208) in the post-colonial multi-racial context of Europe. Even for Derrida, who declares that gift is 'the impossible' (1997, 124), that it is a 'transcendental illusion' (p. 124) or a 'simulacrum' (p. 125), one must render an account of this simulacrum because even if the gift is the 'ineffable exteriority' of economic circulation, it is 'what makes the circle turn' (p. 125).

Gift as a conceptual tool

The idea behind this dissertation has affinities with Mauss' project: tracking cycles of exchange and modes of redistribution by moving beyond the state and the market. While I look at organised beneficence and gifts given to fellow citizens, I do not suggest that the gift economy managed by these organisations and local notables provides an absolute alternative to either side of the state-market dichotomy. Indeed, I rely on historical examples that illustrate how gift economies almost always work simultaneously with market economies (Polanyi 1957; Mauss 1990; Godbout 1998), but

assume an ethos that is carefully kept separate from the operational logic of the market (Mauss 1990). This section is devoted to exploring *the logic of gift* as the source of distinction from market relations.

An important feature of gift is that it resists calculation, yet there have been modest efforts at projecting the scale of gift economies in modern societies. Working with projected numbers for unpaid domestic labour, calculable but unpaid relationships of care, and money and time endowed in philanthropy/charity, an economist, Insel estimates that gift economy is as big as three-quarters of the GDP in France (1995, 118). This number excludes some totally unquantifiable aspects of gift-giving, like showing compassion, informally passing along knowledge and experience, teaching the mother-tongue, and so on. Even though such projections are utterly contradictory to the incalculable nature of the gift, they illustrate how critical but unacknowledged is the gift economy, even in its material aspects.

However, gift is not primarily about providing goods and services; rather it is about establishing bonds. The establishment of bonds via gift relations is directly related to the function of obligation within gift systems. Every gift is embedded with the obligation that it be accepted and returned, but how this happens to be so is the key question theoreticians of the gift have been seeking to answer. Mauss (1990) appreciates the explanation that was provided him by a Maori wise man and explains that the *Hau*, or the spirit, of the object wants to go back to its original owner. Although this explanation can be taken to have a metaphorical value—that there is something in gift that exceeds the gift object—Levi-Strauss (1987) criticises Mauss for positing a mystical and culturally limited quality such as *Hau*. For Levi-Strauss, gift is a structural

relation of exchange involving three inseparable components: giving, receiving and reciprocating. Asking why reciprocity exists is dividing the indivisible and mistaking the part for the whole. A gift obligates its own acceptance and return because we are implicated in this structure of exchange and bound by its unconscious rules, which govern our social practices (1987, 55). Hau is just another signifier (or a 'magical name') that allows us to make sense of this structured social world. In that sense the imaginary that is constructed around the concept Hau is the vernacular 'gift theory' (Silber 1995).

The most common explanation for why people give is a rather economic one: people give because they know that they will be given to in return; they give for future benefit and they, later, assess how profitable (or at least equitable) the transaction was. Against this over-simplification, Bourdieu sharply states that, '[e]conomism is a form of ethnocentrism' (1997b, 205), because it does not recognise any interests other than those capitalism has made known to us: the material interests of the money economy. In contrast to this understanding based on the entrenched conception of human nature as *homo economicus*, Bourdieu develops a nuanced and complicated story by introducing symbolic capital. Gift is an important vehicle, carrying the symbolic capital of social actors in a field of power where individuals strategise using the dimensions of time (when to return a gift) and resources (how and what to give). Yet social agents are already implicated in that field through their *habitus*, and reciprocity is the norm not in itself but always in relation to systems of kinship, religion, economy and morality that shape this *habitus*.

In that sense, gift is an act that cannot be explained by 'logical logic', only by 'practical logic' (Bourdieu 1997b), which is the logic of practice. It does not necessarily require rationality, reflexivity, or even intentionality to be performed correctly. Gift is part of habitus, an aggregated disposition that is acquired (and inherited) during a lifetime. Derrida (1997) adds to this discussion that gift does not need to take place between intentional pre-existing subjects. Instead subjects are implicated in and constituted via the flow of obligations that is the backbone of gift relations.

Commodity exchange, redistribution and gift rely on various arrangements and mechanisms to create obligation and to maintain the flow. These mechanisms create different subjectivities, distinct relations and dissimilar interactions. What define commodity exchange and give it its unique features are the concept and arrangement of contract. Commodity exchange is first and foremost a contractual relationship. Contracts strictly define the terms of equivalence between two objects or deeds, and attribute each a value that is translatable to the other (whether in monetary terms or by means of barter). Moreover, all contracts are limited by time and require the involvement of at least two parties capable of understanding their terms and conditions. Whether written or verbal, all contracts are immediate. When one party provides something to the other, he immediately knows what will be delivered in return. And finally, all contracts have an expiration date. As soon as the agreed transaction is completed, the relationship created by the contract is no longer valid. Hence, contracts do not necessitate any lasting bonds, nor carry an implication of creating one.

Modern nation-states as redistributive bodies are also often conceptualised and understood in terms of contracts. From Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke onwards, the bond

of citizenship has been thought of as a contract made to leave the state of nature, exchanging unbounded freedom with a reliable order. That is why citizenship is talked about in terms of well-defined rights and equally weighted responsibilities. Fraser and Gordon (1998) provide an account of how this shared conception has helped to ignore the weight of non-contractual relations in human life, and how it also proved detrimental to the idea of social citizenship. According to them, citizenship, by protecting private property and the right to sell one's labour, as well as by defining equality as an abstraction with respect to sustaining contracts, made capitalism possible in the first instance and provided it with a legal and moral basis for its existence.

Reciprocal relations, on the contrary, are non-contractual by definition. People who are engaged in reciprocal relations rely on the social bond created and sustained by the relation itself. It is the logic of the gift that sustains these relations and creates obligation, as discussed above. The unboundedness and infiniteness of reciprocal relations make them a source of various source of social bonds ranging from indebtedness, patronage, affection, care, compassion, and congeniality to competition. The same thing may change hands, but its social effect may be drastically different depending on the occasion. As Gregory (1982) suggests, while commodities have prices, gifts have ranks, and these ranks are determined by relations of closeness, power and hierarchy.

Gift resists being subsumed under the category of commodity transaction because of its qualities of non-intentionality and non-calculability, as well as because of the non-contractual obligation it creates. This also allows us to see how the market and modern state are congenial in their assumptions of subjecthood and freedom, as they both rely

on the idea of a contract-making individual. This joint over-valuation of contract has caused the false assumption that obligation can only be thought of when there is an uttered, explicit agreement. Thinking through gift allows us to question this assumption, and to look for mechanisms of obligation that are not subjected to formal laws, but that work through the intermingling of religious faith, honour, prestige and family. This tells us that beneficence is not as arbitrary or voluntary as theorists of social citizenship tend to think; instead, as it is embedded in belief systems, social networks, accumulation of capital and so on, it is institutionalised and well-orchestrated. In the following section, I will explore how Islam approaches the problematique of exchange by briefly reviewing the literature on Islamic economics to understand its basic tenets and instruments.

An Islamic Approach to Economy

In this final section of the chapter, I will briefly discuss what the literature on Islamic economics say about these three of modes of exchange as part of endeavour to create a distinct alternative to contemporary capitalism. However, it is important to note from the beginning that this literature is neither coherent nor unequivocal. There are conflicting ideas regarding the most basic concepts like ‘the public good’, as well as practical regulations like getting a loan to establish a business enterprise. Still, there are significant common themes and established practices to guide the discussion here. I will first lay out the foundational assumptions of an Islamic economics, then introduce its ideals, and finally discuss the injunctions imposed in order to reach this goal.

Muslim thinkers often agree on the duality inherent in human nature regarding human beings’ attitudes towards material gain: people are both selfish and altruistic (M. A.

Khan 1994; Haq 1996). Islam recognizes the contextual and sometimes even simultaneous existence of these two drives and, while controlling selfishness, encourages altruistic behaviour. The assumption that these two primary drives coexist in human nature has led scholars of Islamic economics to develop models of consumption theory that are in relative contrast to the standard neoclassical capitalist models built on the assumption of homo economicus. The non-satiation rule (i.e. more is always preferred over less) and the utility maximisation principle are replaced by a series of choices. The first decision to be made is how much to spend in the name of God for beneficence and how much on individual consumption (M. F. Khan 1995). This calculation depends on the individual's sense of being rewarded for beneficence and the satiation of his or her needs. It is neither possible nor advisable to spend all of one's income on the otherworldly because of the primary and selfish survival drive. It is also unacceptable to spend only on consumption, because the altruistic drive is openly favoured by God.

Islamic economists see the problem of individual consumption as another point of conflict between Islamic and mainstream economics. They attempt to produce a model of ethical consumption which based on needs not wants. According to Khan, 'whereas want is determined by the concept of utility, need, in the Islamic perspective, is determined by the concept of *Maslaha*' (1995, 34). The concept of *maslaha*, which is sometimes translated as welfare (M. F. Khan 1995), and at other times as benefit (Tripp 2006), is itself a concept with a long history and deep meaning. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* defines it as 'welfare', but this meaning expands as a concept used by jurists to mean 'general good' or 'public interest' (Khadduri 1991, 738). Hence it is often transferred from the level of the individual to the broader scale of society and comes to

mean 'social benefit' (for further discussion, see Tripp 2006, 68–76). In fact, these two levels are never thought to be divisible. According to Al-Ghazali, *maslaha* 'is the ultimate purpose of the *Shari'a*, consisting of the maintenance of religion, life, offspring, reason and property' (Khadduri 1991, 739). Hence an economic understanding which locates the reasons for spending under the simultaneously public and private coverage of *maslaha* is significantly different than one which starts with the assumption of the private and rational individual geared towards maximising his or her own interests, i.e. *homo economicus*.

The great majority of Muslim thinkers agree that Islam sanctions private ownership of property (Rodinson 1974; Maududi 1984; Hosseini 1988; M. A. Khan 1994; Haq 1996). God is the ultimate owner of everything that exists, yet this divine ownership does not exclude human beings' right to own property and earn lawfully. Individuals are free to hold, buy, sell, rent and inherit property. Abul A'la Maududi (1984) is insistent and particular in this matter, because according to him, this sanctioning is what makes Islam indisputably incompatible with socialism. Maududi's approach has been challenged by the experiences of Islamic Socialism over the second half of the twentieth century, yet even these governments did not completely abolish the existing property regimes (Tripp 2006). Private property is, therefore, canonically established in Islamic thinking and has historically existed in Muslim societies without a significant breach.

The same is true for wage labour. It is acceptable to sell one's labour to make a living and to hire a labourer (Rodinson 1974). There are no clearly defined restrictions on hiring other than the general considerations of fairness and mutual agreement (Rodinson 1974; Zaim 1994). As long as employer and employee agree on the terms of contract

and the wage is determined from the start, wage labour is widely accepted. Involvement in trades and production are also positively apprehended both canonically and in historical practice (Siddiqi 1981). The only distinction is made between lawful and unlawful earnings (Maududi 1984). 'Dishonesty, fraud and deception, coercive practices, and gamblesome or usurious dealings are prohibited' (Siddiqi 1981, 17). Trading certain goods that are regarded by religion as impure are also forbidden, like alcohol, pork and other swine products (Rodinson 1974). Anything earned through these prohibited practices is considered unlawful (*haram*) and the rest is lawful (*halal*).

While earning and owning are generally sanctioned in Islam, how much to own is a matter of great dispute. As will be discussed below, certain injunctions limit the accumulation of wealth, but jurists throughout history, along with the political and economic thinkers of the last century, have not come to an agreement on what these injunctions truly mean and to what extent they should be applied. According to Iranian scholar Ayetullah Mahmud Taleghani (1983) it is outright forbidden in Islam to save and hoard more than one needs. His ideas are shared by a number of jurists and thinkers who have aimed to further the egalitarian and public-minded aspects of Islam (Tripp 2006). Yet there are many others who downplay these aspects and rather come up with a business-minded version of Islam, which favours savings, entrepreneurship and wealth (see the discussion in Haenni 2011).

Scholars of Islamic economics aim to create economic thought and corresponding economic tools based on these core premises. The core problematic of most of this literature (the question behind even the most quantitatively economic sources) is how to establish a society in which economic injustices are decreased to a minimum. In order

to establish such a society, what is needed first is to define the basic precepts of the economy. According to Timur Kuran (2004), the massive literature on Islamic economics posits two principles upon which such an economy can be built: equality and fairness. 'The principle of equality forbids gross inequalities in the distribution of goods' (p. 104), yet what is sought is not ultimate equality. Islamic property regime does not allow such an absolute end to be achieved. Instead, while extreme inequalities are ruled out, a moderate degree of inequality is accepted. This brings us to the principle of fairness. Kuran defines fairness as 'people's gains are to be "earned" and their losses "deserved"'. It requires the economic system to treat similar economic contributions similarly, and different economic contributions differently' (p. 104). Therefore, economic transactions can only be treated according to their economic value. Gender, race, class, family, and age cannot form the basis of discrimination in business.

These two principles, which are meant to pave the way towards a just society, can only be enforced by injunctions that take the exploration from the level of the imagined society and aspired-for ideals down to the realities of practical life. These realities are shaped by injunctions when followed, yet they are also open to influence from the economic, social and political contexts in which they are rethought and applied (Rodinson 1974).

The most famous and celebrated of these injunctions is the prohibition of interest. The Qur'anic prohibition is directed against *riba*, which literally means 'addition' to the original amount or size. However, jurists are unanimous in the understanding that in Qur'anic terminology *riba* means 'lending money for a prefixed rate of return or interest' (Haq 1996, 117). According to Siddiqi, the rationale behind the prohibition has

a number of dimensions: First, 'in the case of consumption loans [interest] violates the basic function for which God has created wealth, which envisages that the needy be supported by those who have surplus wealth. In the case of productive loans, guaranteed return to capital is unjust in view of the uncertainty surrounding entrepreneurial gains' (1981, 63). Therefore, on the one hand, interest on loans encourages a propensity to save rather than to spend on consumption or beneficence. In doing so, it deprives destitute members of society from their rightful share of wealth. Yet on the other hand, when a loan is invested in production, risks involved are not shared. It is the debtor who singularly assumes all risk, while the creditor is guaranteed a positive return. Thus, interest once again makes saving and hoarding more profitable than making direct investment, so money is taken out of productive circulation without creating any real benefit (maslaha) for society.

The other reason behind the interest ban is that 'it transfers wealth from the poor to the rich, increasing the inequality in the distribution of wealth' (Siddiqi 1981, 63). Through the mechanisms explained above, interest creates an upward flow of wealth. Those who need money most can only acquire the least of it at the highest interest rates. They pay these rates to those who already have their needs covered and their surplus wealth intact. Wealth becomes more and more concentrated, not distributed.

The second Islamic injunction directed towards maintaining equality and diffusion of wealth is inheritance. The Islamic inheritance regime, which is detailed in the Qur'an, has the net effect of hindering the concentration of wealth. It requires well-defined distribution of patrimony to all lawful inheritors, and thereby does not allow wealth to remain concentrated after death (Maududi 1984, 62). Because siblings of the same sex

get equal shares, it also rules out primogeniture. Therefore, the growth of family estates is interrupted (Kuran 2004, 106). According to Tillion (2007), this intricate inheritance regime has historically posed the greatest threat to the patriarchal political order of the Middle East, giving female family members a share of the inheritance and making male household heads financially independent, thus risking clan loyalties. However, it would be fair to say the challenge has never been welcome and the rule has often been sidestepped, especially on the matter of female inheritors.

The final injunction I want to expand on is the injunction of giving. It is also the most relevant to the subject matter of this dissertation. The Qur'an obliges Muslims to give away a certain proportion of their wealth as *zekat*, and encourages ongoing voluntary giving as *sadaka*. Zekat is one of the five pillars of the faith and is often seen as being in equal importance with daily prayers. Zekat is due on money, valuables, merchandise, agricultural land, livestock, property and investments. Although it is not explicitly stated in Quran, the widespread and agreed upon rate for movables and merchandise is 2.5% of the value of the items that make up a person's wealth (Kuran 2003). Zekat only accrues if one has an accumulation above a certain limit, which is widely accepted as any wealth that is equivalent to or more than 85 grams of gold (Şentürk 2007, 65). There are widely discussed and contested calculation methods for commercial inventory, agricultural produce or financial investments, that I will not detail here. What is more important for the discussion here is that zekat is a mandatory transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor (or the needy otherwise) and its redistributive function has been much elaborated by Islamic economists—to such an extent that in his literature survey, Siddiqi considers it to be 'one of the main pillars of Islam's economic system' (1981, 61). Zekat is said to have many economic functions like increasing aggregate

demand, but its most important economic effect is once again related to the concentration and accumulation of wealth. Zekat efficiently discourages hoarding and saving by 'increasing the cost of waiting' (S. M. Ahmed 1980, 124), since wealth shrinks as time passes, due to the annual zekat. According to most Islamic economists, the combined effect of the interest ban and zekat is to direct wealth towards production, consumption and beneficence (Zaim 1994). Accordingly, Tripp calls these the 'instruments of the moral economy' (2006, 124).

Zekat functions as a tool of both redistribution and reciprocity. Throughout the history of Islam there have been numerous attempts to centralise the collection of zekat at the hands of states (Zysow 2002; Tripp 2006). Most of these schemes failed after a period of time, usually due to the high overhead costs incurred in this cumbersome activity. During the last century, for example, Pakistan has revisited the idea and established zekat as a tax to be collected by state agents. However, this fund made up a mere 0.2 per cent of GDP in 1994 (Tripp 2006, 125). The common practice is to leave the payment and distribution of zekat to individuals, thereby transferring it to the realm of gift relations. This does not make zekat any less of a redistributive tool, but grants it an important role in reciprocal relations as well.

Zekat is not the only injunction to give. Though not as strict and predetermined, there is also an injunction to spend a proportion of one's wealth on the needs of other people, especially co-believers. This injunction to spend generously on charitable purposes is a tool defined by the Qur'an to encourage the altruistic side of human nature. Because zekat is obligatory, its performance is not expected to create any soteriological rewards, while charity, because it is voluntary, is what brings a person closer to God (Topbaş

2006). Historically, however, beneficence has never been a purely voluntary, personal, conscientious and ad hoc act. An institutional and intricate framework has been developed, and this has effectively channelled beneficence towards welfare provision for more than a millennium. This topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

This list of injunctions is nothing if not exhaustive. It reflects the selective processes Islamic economists go through in their attempts to delineate a distinctively Islamic economy. These attempts do not take place in a vacuum either; they are often undertaken to find a response to the modern capitalist social-economic order to which Muslim societies and individual Muslims must adapt. In the face of the invasive power of capitalist markets (and the values intrinsic to them), which require integration and adaptation (as felt by Muslim intellectuals), these injunctions are taken up, invented and reformulated. That is why, however authentic and Islamic the vocabulary is, their utterance is shaped by an outside that is seen pervasive and hostile, but at the same time powerful and admirable. This is the challenge Islamist economists and intellectuals in general are facing: how to come up with a truly authentic and Islamic answer to the questions created in a different order, in a world not of their own making. In other words, as Charles Tripp elegantly puts it:

... their views of society, social cohesion and public utility were informed by the very categories that had made possible the imagination of a world transformed by the expansion of capital, the organisation of human labour and the calculation of social utility. They tried to reclaim these for a distinctive Islamic order, but their reasoning was often vulnerable to the influence of that which they were seeking to criticise. Interpretations of Islamic obligations were coloured, often shaped, by these same imaginative constructions. As with other proposed alternatives to capitalism, their visions seem less like radical alternatives, and more like projects competing on the same terrain, judged therefore by broadly similar criteria. (2006, 8)

As an example, let's take up the prohibition of interest. As the Kuran observes, Islamic economists often approach these injunctions as 'unambiguous guidelines for attaining economic justice' (Kuran 2004, 109). It seems as if their application to real life situations is simply a matter of procedure, yet although everyone agrees to the injunction, say for example the interest ban, there is no agreement on the procedure. In order to find a way to operate within a global economy maintained by financial institutions whose main sources of revenue are interest-on-credit and an infinite number of financial derivatives, it was necessary to establish a banking system that worked in accordance with Islamic principles. In the last fifty years, Islamic financial institutions that operate on principles of profit-sharing instead of based on interest have become increasingly popular in the Muslim world. However, how much of these practices of interest-free banking are really 'Islamic' per se is still a source of much debate. According to well-known Pakistani economist Naqvi, 'to replace interest by profit is not necessarily an Islamic reform either, because it might replace capitalism based on interest-and-profit by a capitalism which is based only on profit!' (1994, 111). He, among many others, argues that the prohibition of interest is only one facet of a rule 'which prohibits *all* financial deals that perpetuate, or create, distributional inequalities' (p. 112). However, as Tripp argues, 'Islamic banking, far from challenging global capitalism, has become an integral part of the global financial system' (2006, 147), one of the most infamous sources of inequality on the face of the earth (Hardt and Negri 2001).

Similar examples can be given regarding inheritance or state-run zekat funds, however the question here is not how genuinely Islamic contemporary enactments of Islamic injunctions are; it is rather what to make of a system of economic thinking that

approaches spending by humans through God as an intrinsic and mandatory element of individuals' resource allocation. This premise becomes even more important given that, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, capitalist invasion of life-worlds is never complete and homo economicus is a construct, not a depiction of reality. The Islamic approach to human nature allows an economics in which redistribution and reciprocal relations are given as much importance as commodity transactions. Through the sanctioning of private property and trades, Islamic economic thinking openly promotes commodity transactions. But the assumption that human beings are altruistic by nature and the injunction of generosity in giving bring reciprocal and redistributive activities to the fore as well, rather than approaching them as marginalised and archaic forms of social transaction destined to disappear with the transformation of economic systems. This certainly does not mean that these three mechanisms are equally weighted. The leading role is not determined by religious precepts but by social, economic and political contexts. Still, they are integral to Islamic economic thinking and to the self-conceptions of Muslims as believers and ethical beings.

Conclusion

In this chapter, my aim has been to introduce and situate a particular mechanism of exchange into its rightful place in our conception of modern socio-economic order. This order is often named capitalism, without any further qualification, and at the expense of a wide array of modalities that are far from being capitalist- or market-oriented. In order to open a space for one among many of these neglected modes, i.e. the gift, I focused on a few threads that make up the core assumptions behind the deterministic and fatalistic narratives of capitalism. One of these threads is the ontological misconception of man

as homo economicus, while the other consists of the dualistic and antagonistic conceptions of state and market.

The idea of homo economicus and of delimiting exchange with commodity transaction leaves us with a human being who is predisposed to exchange what she owns for maximum gain and to further her interests. In the universe of such persons, everything, including labour and affection, has a predetermined and quantifiable value, and exchanging them is an objective, impersonal act. In order to challenge this view I introduced another mode of circulation: the gift.

Among gift's many features, the most critical is that it is primarily a social relation, not an object. Gift builds upon connections between people and enhances them. It creates subjects who give, accept and return within socially determined terms and conditions. Therefore it relies on social meanings, statuses and positions. Gift is also a relation that expands over time; it is not immediate and rarely has closure. So it lasts unless there is an explicit move to break up the gift cycle.

As such, gift cannot be approached simply as a private act, one that begins with a seedling of generosity planted in an individual's consciousness. It is very much socially created and regulated, and takes place according to rights and obligations that precede the gift act itself. Among these grammars where gift finds its expression, religion occupies a noteworthy position. Scholars of Islamic economics particularly emphasise gift acts defined as zekat or sadaka as integral elements of a distinctively Islamic economics. This phenomenon does not formally exist as economy at the moment and its possible existence as a coherent system is dubious and cannot overshadow the

significance of this particular aspect of Islamic economic thought. Reciprocal relations are key to the well-being of society-as-market transactions or redistributive arrangements.

Yet belief itself cannot cover all aspects of any single gift act. A number of social factors affect its very possibility as well as the way it is enacted. There are social institutions that have power over realms much larger than the consciousness of individuals, and through these institutions, giving and receiving subjects are created. The next chapter will reframe such an institution, the waqf, as a lawful instantiation of gift-giving and as a powerful component of the social imaginary regarding welfare.

CHAPTER 2 WAQF AS INSTITUTION AND IMAGINARY

This chapter introduces institutional forms of gift-giving in Turkey and the imaginary that has developed around these forms. The discussion revolves around the institution of waqf. I do not examine this institution as a historical example but is instead a living legal formation that shapes and affects current welfare provisions in Turkey, whether they come from citizens or the state. I also attempt to illustrate how the waqf can and should be understood simultaneously as a religious and secular institution.

I begin with a detailed description of the waqf and its features. I then discuss the historical roles waqf institutions have played in societies: as social policy tools, building blocks of the public sphere and instantiations of citizenship. The final section of the chapter is devoted to illustrating how the waqf as an institution affects and informs current beneficence activities and the welfare scene in Turkey. In order to do this I briefly overview the historical development of welfare services since the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

The Institution of Waqf

In Turkey, doing registered charitable activities is only possible under one of two legal titles. The first of these is the title *dernek* (association), the generic name for any civil society organisation. Any seven people who come together around an idea or a cause

can establish a *dernek*, register it with the Ministry of Interior and start functioning immediately. The second legal title is *vakıf*, which brings with it some special tax privileges but is at the same time a lot harder to establish. The founding of a vakıf requires a considerable initial endowment and a guarantee for its perpetuity. The number of existing vakıfs in Turkey is thus understandably much smaller.

But in Kayseri, the founders, workers and volunteers of charitable organisations almost always refer to their respective organisations as vakıfs, regardless of their actual legal status. These organisations may actually be associations, or may even lack any legal status at all, but in the vernacular they are all called vakıfs. There are also derivations of the word in wide circulation, such as *vakıfçılık*, identifying the activity of being involved with these organisations or charitable activities in general, or *vakıfçı*, meaning those who actively work for such causes. Although there exist a variety of terms that could be used to define the work that vakıfçıs do and their institutional affiliations, the strong preference for these neologisms points to a significant element of these people's self-understanding and identification, as well as the historical path we can trace back in order to develop a fuller understanding of these acts and their social meaning.

Vakıf is the Turkish variant of the Arabic word, whose common transliteration in English is *waqf*. As mentioned before, I use 'vakıf' when I refer to the organisations that provided me the data in the Turkish context, while I use 'waqf' to denote the institution itself, with its social, economic and civic implications. The waqf is a legal institution that has had regulated religious endowments throughout the history of Islam. Despite many changes in the details of waqf law over this lengthy history, the term waqf has usually designated a particular endowment made by a man or a woman for the

benefit of well-defined beneficiaries. The endowment might consist of movables and immovables that would either generate revenues to sustain the waqf, such as land or an estate, or that would be beneficial on their own, such as books or scientific equipment. The beneficiaries of these endowments could be mosques, schools, hospitals, aqueducts, fountains, roads or inns; they might also be their administrators, personnel, students, patients, guests, and patrons, or even the family members of their founders, as well as various categories of the poor. A complete list of endowments, beneficiaries and plans for distribution of revenue from these endowments would be compiled for every waqf in its founding document, the *vakıfname*, or *waqfiyyah* (waqf deed) and distributed among beneficiaries. Waqf deeds are written in the presence of a judge and two witnesses, then signed by the founder, witnesses and the judge. The established waqf is then administered by a trustee (*mütevelli*) or a board of trustees, who are responsible for keeping the promises made in the deed; therefore, their performance is not a private matter but subject to checks and balances by local judges and the community in order to keep the legal, religious and societal implications of the waqf intact. In contemporary Turkey, waqfs are established at a state office (*Vakıflar Müdürlüğü*) and are periodically audited by state officials, so their system of oversight has been moved from the purview of local judges and communities to a centralised state office. The significance of this shift will be discussed later in the chapter, but first I want to introduce some basic features of the waqf.

Historically, founding a waqf was a public act that gave the founders prestige. Yet waqf founders did not necessarily belong to the ruling or upper classes of their respective societies; they were men and women from all walks of life. All these founders were individuals who made endowments from their own property, not in the name of an

office. Among such founders were sultans, sultanas, high rank government officials, local notables, traders, and humble homeowners or even a booklet. Women actively founded waqfs too, to such an extent that up to 40% of some cities' waqfs were founded by women (Çizakça 2000).

Founding a waqf was not a right/obligation restricted to Muslims either. In the Ottoman Empire, Jews and Christians were equally qualified to make endowments. Initially, these endowments could not be made to benefit a Jewish or Christian religious institution, like a church or a synagogue, but this prohibition was later left aside on the premise that these too would benefit travellers and the poor (Singer 2008, 99). So, having come into being as a Muslim institution, the waqf's civic features soon overshadowed any religious content, and the idea was adopted by members of different faiths. According to Verbit (2002), through various adoptions, the institution travelled as far as England and gave rise to the institution of the trust.

Over the course of the institution's history, waqf institutions have become an integral and essential element of urban environments in Muslim geographies. Mosques, hospitals, schools, soup kitchens, roads, infrastructure, caravanserais, Sufi lodges, libraries, observatories, scientific laboratories, student inns, scholars' quarters, public baths, fountains, marketplaces, bazaars... in short, nearly all public places were built as waqf and financed by endowments. While in Tabriz in the thirteenth century a complete neighbourhood housing 30,000 people was built as the waqf of the chemist-statesman Rashid el-Din (Arjomand 1998), Ottomans used the waqf as an urban development tool to transform the landscape of newly conquered towns. Various studies have documented in detail the impact of the waqf in the built environment (see for example Ergin 1953;

Pinon 1987; Haneda and Miura 1994; Demirel 2000), but the urban function of waqf was not limited to architecture.

Waqf institutions were an integral part of daily life in Muslim towns. As an economist, Çizakça (2000), approaches this aspect of the waqf through the supply of public goods, which are non-rivalrous and maintain non-excludable provisions. He argues that the waqf was very successful in achieving a steady supply of these goods by effectively financing public welfare services. A range of professions were sustained by endowments, like scholars, teachers, doctors, Qur'an reciters, imams, administrative personnel of all these establishments, their cleaners, porters, drivers and so on. Moreover, waqf institutions were an integral part of commercial and productive life in cities as well as in rural areas, since shops in market places, workshops for industry and the arable land in villages, in most cases, belonged to waqf institutions. Therefore waqf laws and practices directly affected leases, production and trades.

The waqf between public and private

The institution of the waqf poses challenges to our modern understanding of the public/private binary, as well as of self-interestedness and altruism. These challenges stem from a) the legal property regime of the waqf, b) the intentions of waqf founders—the Arabic word 'waqf' literally means 'to stop' or 'to freeze', pointing to the fact that endowed goods and properties were once and for all removed from market transactions and made absolute. They were then seen as belonging to God, upon whom humans had no claim. In that sense, at least in principle, waqf property was protected against state confiscation, taxation, inheritance laws (to varying degrees) and market transactions.

However, there have been many exceptions, including massive confiscations by the states that were founded after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the twentieth century, as will be discussed in detail.

The second important feature of waqf law was that it considered the expressed desires and intentions of the founders as being above any other property law. Hence, for example, founding a waqf made it possible to sidestep Islamic heritage rules. Founders could endow some of their property as a waqf, and thus take it out of inheritance and give some beneficiaries privileges. By this method, favoured children, some distant relatives or freed slaves would be able to benefit from the inheritance. These two important features have led some scholars to question the authenticity of the charitable intentions of waqf founders, as waqf endowments could have well been used as a tool to protect private earnings and property. With these two features in operation simultaneously, the waqf has been an important financial tool for centuries. Later, it became customary to make distinctions between waqf institutions that are *genuinely* founded with charitable motives and others that simply aim to protect family property.

According to this classification there were two types of waqf: the *waqf ahli* (family waqf) and the *waqf khayri* (charitable waqf), yet in legal terms, a family waqf was no different from a charitable waqf providing welfare services to the general public. This distinction was also not possible to uphold in many circumstances, since the exclusive list of beneficiaries of any family waqf would still end by listing the poor as the final beneficiaries in the event that the original beneficiaries had died (Çizakça 2011, 80). Hence, some of waqfs that had initially been founded as waqf ahlis were gradually transformed into waqf khayris over their centuries-long existences. Moreover, almost all

waqf institutions benefited family members, freed slaves, servants or relatives by assigning them to trustee positions, as members of the staff or as recipients of revenue, despite the fact that the main aim of the waqf was to serve public causes.

Given these ambiguities, it is not easy to maintain this distinction between the family waqf and the charitable waqf. However, the attempt to do so says something about our modern desire to establish an absolute separation of public and private interests and functions. This desire often goes hand in hand with a forgetfulness about the political dimension of the distinction and by whom it was first made. Amy Singer argues that the distinction made between the family waqf and the charitable waqf may actually be the result of criticism the French launched against the waqf system in their colonised territories. The colonial regime aimed to access land endowed through waqfs for settlements and to liberate these properties for commercial transactions (Singer 2008, 107). The waqf system was inimical to these goals because it had created a considerable amount of inalienable property. Thus, to prove that some waqfs served no public function would have created legitimate grounds for a shift to a private property regime.

The notions of public and private, from the standpoint of ownership and function, are thus challenged by waqf property law. According to Dallal, '[w]aqf systems duplicate many of the roles played in the modern states by public, non trading corporations, religious and charitable foundations and trusts, religious offices and family settlements' (2004, 28). To complicate the matter a little more, I will now elaborate on how the intentions of waqf founders make us consider the binaries of public and private, as well as self-interest and the common good. In their waqf deeds, Ottoman waqf founders systematically elaborated two sources of motivation for their acts: spiritual development

and guaranteeing a good afterlife by being close to God and contributing to the well-being of the community (Singer 2008, 100). Although the first motivation is oriented towards the salvation of the self while the second was directed towards public well-being and relief, these two were neither conflictual nor incompatible, as the concept of *maslaha* suggests (see Chapter 1). Instead, they complemented each other because they reflected the conception of the community of believers 'not as an antithesis to the private individual but as an integral or synthetic component of [an individual's] life as a Muslim' (Hoexter 2002, 122). Therefore the well-being of the community of believers, the maintenance of its order according to Islamic principles and morals, and the well-being of each and every individual who is part of it, contributed to the spiritual progress of the individual as much as he or she contributed to it; he or she was directly affected by it.

Certainly the considerations of waqf founders does not have to be limited to their manifest aims. In particular, monumental waqf works like huge mosque complexes that involve soup kitchens, schools, public baths and accommodation facilities for students and staff, bear witness to the prestige, power and piety of their founders (Kayaalp-Aktan 2007). And all these qualities were particularly beneficial for the rulers who could utilise them to legitimise their rule. If power was necessary for sovereignty over people, then piety, and hence prestige, were required for one to establish him- or herself not only as a powerful and capable ruler but as a 'just' one (Mardin 1991).

The waqf as a civic institution

The waqf system acted as the main welfare provider in a vast geography for more than a millennium. Hospitals, soup kitchens, lodges, shelters, orphanages and schools were all run by waqf institutions (Bonner, Ener, and Singer 2003; Dallal 2004). Moreover, these institutions provided the poor and destitute allowances of food, clothing and money. It will be evident later in the chapter that, at the moment, it is this dimension of the waqf which effectively shapes the imaginary regarding the well-being of society and poverty alleviation in Turkey. However, the eminence of the waqf is not limited to its vital importance in welfare provision. The waqf is, once and for all, a civic institution, intertwining these two functions within itself.

Scholars have approached the waqf as a civic institution, emphasising its various aspects as a social policy tool, a public sphere agent and as an instantiation of citizenship. In this section I will outline these formulations. Focusing on waqf institutions' great potential for social impact, Arjomand (1998) describes their systematic use as a major instrument of public policy. In his research on the successive states that have reigned over today's Iran, Arjomand details rulers'—especially Persian-speaking viziers' and grand viziers'—tactical moves that involve making endowments towards the teaching of one school of Islam or another, for one sect of Sufism or another. He also illustrates the different emphases placed on certain sciences, like astronomy in one period or chemistry in another. Through the waqfs they founded, these rulers actively shaped the educational and denominational composition of their subjects and delicately balanced possible tensions between various groups. The public role they assumed through these endowments was also an expression of the management of

another tension, namely between the native and established elites of the towns, and the ruling military classes who were rarely of similar origins. In this context the institution of the waqf provided the legal and social basis for a civil society that cannot be thought of as exclusively separate from the state (Arjomand 1998).

Miriam Hoexter's (2002) approach to the waqf has important parallels with Arjomand's civil society argument. Hoexter attempts to illustrate how the waqf as a lawful institution and, as a material and legal entity, is a testament to the existence of a public sphere in Islamic states throughout history. She grounds her argument in a definition of the public sphere as 'a zone of autonomous social activity between the family and the ruling authorities' (p. 119), in a way broader than Western civil society conceptions. She argues that within the specific constellation of power in Islamic political thought, waqf institutions have created a realm for the communication of discourse between the rulers, the community of believers and the Islamic scholars, wherein each party acted in accordance with a shared understanding of rights and duties. Because the rulers were as bound by waqf law as any other citizen, members of the public could rightfully and openly make claims to rights and entitlements. The same principle also initiated a participatory cooperation between the rulers and local communities on issues such as welfare provision and urban development. In short, the waqf thus functioned as an integrative institution wherein shared values were established and maintained between the people and their rulers.

Isin and Lefebvre approach the waqf as an institutionalised form of 'gift giving [that] instantiates and organises legal rights and obligations, legal subjectivity, and legal legitimation' (2005, 6). As such, they see it as a legitimate source of citizenship, to be

understood beyond Orientalist and Occidentalist conceptualisations. Building on Derrida (1997), they argue that subjects are implicated in gift-giving practices; that 'they do not pre-exist but are constituted through them' (p. 8). Hence, the waqf as a civic gift-giving practice creates the subjects that enact and fulfil it. Attributing to the waqf the quality of being an instantiation of citizenship poses an important challenge to dominant understandings of citizenship.

As I commented earlier with regard to establishment criteria, the creation of a waqf was necessarily the act of an individual, and how it would be run was also determined in detail by that individual. It was the same for the rulers of Islamic states. Sultans, governors and high officials only established waqfs as individuals, never in the name of an office or a realm. As Hoexter observes, this would be a practice 'simply unknown to Islam and unacceptable according to the terms of the law of waqf' (2002, 121). The waqf is essentially a person's gift to his or her community, city and eventually to God. Despite being a public act that carries legal, moral and social obligations, this personal starting point should not be taken lightly, as it provides a clue about the power regime that symbolises the social order the waqf. This power, however institutionalised, remains a personal one, enacted within relations of gift-giving. Hence, it is neither abstracted nor impersonalised like the bureaucratic workings of modern welfare states. It implies belonging to a polity, having a status within it and acknowledging an obligation to contribute to that polity as a virtuous member. The religious marking and value of such an act only adds to its personal aspects.

Containing all these facets, the waqf is both a religious and secular organisation. The discourse that surrounds it is interwoven with religious imagery and vocabulary, but at

the same time it is a governmental tool, a citizenship act and the building block of civil society. Both the reasons behind its establishment and its social functions attest to an intermeshing of secular and religious values and operatives. It is also a significant institution of welfare provision, and fulfils this function through gift-giving. It is a public institution driven by both public and private motives and incentives that are both religious and secular.

The decline of the waqf

During the nineteenth century, waqf institutions started to lose their importance as modern bureaucratic apparatuses began to develop. Moreover, the intricate and complex welfare system that had been upheld and maintained by the institutions had become a target of detrimental policies. These policies served the ultimate desire to modernise and Westernise colonised Muslim lands and especially the Ottoman Empire.

Isin (2007) argues that, during the nineteenth century, Western powers insistently asked for the abolition of the waqf system and the liberation of waqf properties in the Ottoman Empire. According to him, behind this condition rested a double motivation. The first was capitalist drive. At the time, almost one-third of all land across the Empire was withdrawn from market transaction as waqf property. It was viewed as important to liberate this land and make it accessible to market actors in order to transform modes of production and circulation in the Empire. So, looking for new landscapes to expand their markets for raw materials and products, Western colonisers urged these properties to be alienated. Second, the project of abolishment was driven by ideas and ideologies about nation-state building and citizenship. Citizenship then began to be understood as

membership to a state with well-defined geographical borders and an identifiable population, a member that has both rights and duties towards the state itself. Intermediary institutions, such as guilds in Europe and waqfs in Muslim societies, were seen as aberrations unwilling to recognise the validity of any other institution that presumed to come between states and individuals. Citizenship in centralised nation-states ties each and every individual to the state, and more importantly, is expected to tear apart all other belongings, identifications, sources of rights and loyalties. On the contrary, waqfs were themselves sources of legal subjectivities, local connections, and lasting relations of gratefulness and reciprocity.

Colonial regimes, as a general trend, are marked with such dislocations. Manuel de Landa (1997) argues that colonialism was not only about extracting resources and transferring wealth. He describes how colonisers aimed to copy their own institutions and governmental models in the geographies they colonised. This required either ignoring and wiping out (as in the case of indigenous peoples of the Americas) or changing the already-existing systems of land distribution, production, finance and governance. All these local systems and institutions were labelled backward, non-modern and as impediments to progress. Seen as a stumbling block of colonisation, they were better off replaced by Western institutions. Although the Ottoman Empire occupies an ambiguous place in the history of colonisation, its encounter with colonisers included similar efforts. The Ottoman property regime, taxation system and waqf institution became targets of these policies (Ş. Pamuk 1987).

When it comes to creating copies of certain institutions, colonisers were never alone. Almost all around the world Westernised elites of their respective colonies were more

than willing to dislocate local arrangements and establish modern systems. Bureaucrats of the late Ottoman Empire became convinced of the drawbacks of the waqf system, so implemented such policies eagerly. Still, the abolishment of the waqf system did not happen instantaneously, given its entrenchment in society and sacred status. In Turkey, it took almost a century for the nationalist and secularist modernisers to tear the system down. First came centralisation, which deprived the waqfs from their financial and administrative autonomy. All waqfs in the Empire were moved under the rule of the newly established Waqfs Ministry in 1836 (Çizakça 2000). The ministry was charged with collecting all waqf revenue and redistributing a designated portion back to it. Centralisation caused an immediate decline in the establishment of new waqfs and crippled the already existing ones by causing a shortage of resources.

The second attack to the system came in the form of taxation. Waqf institutions had been enjoying tax exemptions due to the Islamic legal base that recognised them as property endowed to and owned by God. In 1860, after the Crimean War, the British government posed the condition of abolishment of the waqf system, in response to the Ottoman government's request for a loan (Çizakça 2000). It was not possible to abolish the system completely but, in 1867, for the first time in history, waqf institutions were made to pay taxes to the state. According to Isin (2007), this was not simply a financial decision aimed at reducing the budget deficit and contributing to the payment of foreign debt, but also an important move towards secularising the state and its framework of citizenship. He argues, '...the secularisation of waqf administration practically displaced waqfs as an institution of virtue, a gift to the city and God, and thus exempt from taxation, and dissolved it into a state service. With the 1867 tax law, the ground on

which the massive secularisation of the early republic would be built on was established' (p. 10).

During the second part of the nineteenth century the waqf system continued to lose power and importance. The Empire's loss of territories had a catastrophic effect on waqf institutions, as it also meant the loss of revenue-regenerating waqf land. During the chaotic years of World War I and the subsequent Greco-Turkish War the abolishment project was held aside for a period. The new Turkish Republican government then made a last move to eliminate all traces of the previous welfare regime by confiscating the great majority of waqf properties. With this move, the perpetuity principle was irretrievably damaged and most waqf property was sold or nationalised. In 1926, the Civil Law introduced the term '*tesis*', simply meaning *establishment*, in order to designate endowments for a specific purpose, and wiped the legal system off the term waqf completely. Waqf then became a term used to refer to the remnants of Ottoman waqfs that had been centralised and confiscated, and also to waqf institutions belonging to non-Muslim minorities protected by international agreements. Only after 1967, with a change to the Civil Law, was the term tesis (establishment) replaced by vakıf, and the foundation of new vakıfs was made possible, albeit without the institution's religious character and the principle of perpetuity, due to the secularist foundations of the Republic.

Yet, despite all attempts to secularise and centralise it, the waqf as a regulative ideal and an important element of the social imaginary has survived. With its religious, personalistic and public undertones, it is this ideal that still resonates between the discourse of politicians and the acts of benefactors in the contested realm of welfare

provision in Turkey. It is also this ideal that feeds into the vernacular vocabulary developed by Kayseri charity workers, such as the neologism *vakıfçı* as a term of self-identification denoting anyone who personally and systematically aides and cares for others. The idea of the *waqf* is also alive in the state discourse around providing for its poor citizens, to such a degree that the state inserts itself into this arena by founding *waqf* institutions of an interesting sort. Understanding the creation of these *state vakıfs* requires a brief introduction to the Turkish welfare system. In the next section I will provide this background information.

The Welfare Regime of the Turkish Republic

In Turkey, the first three decades of the Republic were a period of authoritarian, single-party rule, during which, the state tried to consolidate itself. Within its newly drawn borders lived a mostly agrarian, war-ridden and poverty-stricken population, only 24.4 per cent of which resided in urban environments (Buğra 2007, footnote number 25). Yet the strong and even sometimes forceful aspiration of modernisation enacted by the founders of the Republic did not include attempts to increase the rate of urbanisation. According to Buğra, this was indicative of a deliberate attempt to contain poverty and ‘backwardness’ in the villages (2007, 39). This policy required the creation of workers whose village origins would remain intact and without permitting their migration to cities. Factory compounds were established all around the country, most often in locations far away from cities, usually with their own dormitories, where workers were first introduced to ‘modern life’. These workers were recruited from nearby villages, and as they usually had their families still residing there, they maintained close ties with their places of origin. The livelihoods of these peasant-workers and their households

mostly depended on agricultural production. Buğra identifies this policy with the peasantist ideologies of the early Republic. This ideology was made appealing to the peasants themselves through tax exemptions and various state subsidies. In short, the fiscal and labour-related policies, enacted together, proved successful in keeping rural populations immobilised and containing poverty in the countryside until single-party rule ended in 1950. With the exception of the industrial workers, villagers had no health insurance or social citizenship rights.

Yet during the 1940s, the last decade of the single-party rule, other developments in the realm of social citizenship were enacted. First, the Social Security Organisation for formal sector workers (*SSK*) was established in 1945, and second, various retirement schemes for civil servants were gathered under the roof of the Retirement Chest (*Emekli Sandığı*) in 1949. These two organisations, along with another scheme established in 1971 for the self-employed—including agricultural workers (*Bağ-Kur*)—would then form the corporatist three-tier welfare system of the second half of the century. Yet, in these early years, as well as through the end of the century, the *SSK* and Retirement Chest covered only a small minority of the working population, let alone those who were not working but were in need of social assistance.

Gradually, formal social welfare mechanisms in Turkey grew into an inegalitarian corporatism with a hierarchy of pensions and health care among the working population (Buğra and Keyder 2006). Corporatism is a hierarchical welfare system that treats various elements of the working population differently under an assortment of welfare schemes (Esping-Andersen 1990). The trademark of this system is the special privileges civil servants get as an award for their loyalty to the state. In Turkey too, the three-tier

social security system consisting of the Retirement Chest for state employees, SSK for workers and Bağ-Kur for the self-employed favoured civil servants in terms of benefits, pensions and health care. Also, all three of these separate schemes were premium-based and left more than fifty per cent of the working population (i.e. informal workers) and those who are not eligible to work, uncovered (Buğra and Keyder 2003).

According to the report Buğra and Keyder prepared for the United Nations Development Programme (2003), the Turkish welfare regime can best be understood in comparison with the regimes of Southern European countries. These regimes are characterised by a labour market structure in which self-employment and family workers are prevalent; a large portion of the labour and other economic activity goes undocumented; the social security system is corporatist; there is an almost total absence of formal policy against poverty; and the importance of family, local governments and networks in increasing the livelihood of individuals is at social risk (Saraceno 2002; Buğra and Keyder 2003).

Both in other Southern European countries and in Turkey a significant transformation along more universalistic and egalitarian lines has recently begun. In Turkey one of these recent developments was the introduction of the unemployment wage in 1999 for those who have accumulated a certain level of premiums in the system. The three-tier system was then abolished and all schemes were brought under the roof of the Social Security Institution (*SGK*) in 2006. The establishment of the SGK first eliminated inequalities in the realm of healthcare provision to different scheme members: all hospitals, including participating private ones, were opened to the working population,

pensioners and their dependents. Second, all children under the age of 18 were granted access to universal healthcare.

Welfare provision to those who are not covered by the social security system is a whole different story. The Green Card scheme, introduced in 1992, gave this large portion of the population access to healthcare services. Gradually the number of Green Card holders reached almost 20% of the population and exceeded the number of SGK members in some impoverished provinces. When the Green Card Scheme was terminated and all cardholders were transferred to the General Health Insurance Scheme by the end of 2011, 9.5 million cardholders' medical needs were being met by public funds (SGK 2011). Minimal monetary assistance to 'poor and needy' citizens over 65 years of age began in 1976, but disability and career benefits only began in 2005. All these benefits are financed by the Social Security Institution but the eligibility of individual beneficiaries is at the discretion of *Social Solidarity Vakıfs* in every province and district.

Social Solidarity Vakıfs

Apart from these monthly benefits schemes, most social assistance schemes are financed and administered by the Fund for the Encouragement of Social Cooperation and Solidarity (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışmayı Teşvik Fonu*), which reports directly to the prime minister and operates in provinces and districts via state-founded Social Solidarity Vakıfs. At the moment, there are 931 Social Solidarity Vakıfs located in town halls all around Turkey. The trustees of each vakıf consist of the provincial governor or the district governor, the mayor, the highest Ministry of Health and

Ministry of Education officials, the chair of the Social Services and Child Welfare Directorate and three notable citizens. This board of trustees is responsible for assessing and selecting those who are in need of assistance, and to manage the funds they regularly receive from the Fund. They also determine who will receive old age or disability benefits. Although established in 1986, the Fund became important in poverty alleviation during the second half of the 90s, yet it was at the beginning of the 2000s that its budget and reach began to be significant. In 2001, the Solidarity Fund's budget was 486 million Turkish Lira (£234 million), and it has provided support and relief to over 9 million citizens (Buğra and Keyder 2003). Coming to 2009, the Fund's expenditures began to exceed its income, reaching and has reached to 2,365 million TL (£1,020 million), out of which 500 million TL (£215 million) is used for transfers made to the Ministries of Education and Health for their own social assistance schemes (like free meals for students at rural schools or the Green Card Scheme), while the rest was used for the vakıfs' own social assistance expenditures (SYDGM 2010). The assistance activities of these vakıfs include provision of cash allowances; food, clothes and coal supply; coverage of extraordinary medical costs that fall outside the Green Card Scheme; running soup kitchens and providing disaster relief.

Initially, Social Solidarity Vakıfs were expected to receive donations from persons and from the private sector alongside their public funding. This way, they would have had autonomy and fulfilled the function of creating solidarity, as the name suggests. But the donations have fallen short of expected levels, and at the moment vakıfs are almost solely dependent on public resources (Açar 2009). There is only one significant donor to the fund though: the World Bank. After the catastrophic financial crisis of 2001, the World Bank began allocating resources for conditional cash transfers to be distributed

through Social Solidarity Vakıfs. Transfers are tied to school attendance and regular health checks for pregnant women and their newborns, in accordance with World Bank policies; the responsibilities of the vakıfs are only procedural.

Local Social Solidarity Vakıfs have relative control over their resources that are not tied to such strict schemes, but they do not have the autonomy to invest their income in revenue-generating activities, as ordinary vakıfs can lawfully do. The majority of their boards of trustees consist of appointed bureaucrats, and these bureaucrats act like agents of distribution for centrally allocated funds. Boards have a few members from the civil sector—local notables reputed to have expertise about the needs of the poor—yet, at least in Kayseri, these members act only as advisers to be heard from once in a while. The real decision-making powers lie in the hands of the governor, who makes decisions regarding allocation and also decides the criteria for assistance. But again, given his official position, he lacks the autonomy to shape the vakıf as a waqf founder should be able to do. Practically, Social Solidarity Vakıfs are no different from local Social Services or Healthcare Directorates, spending centrally allocated resources on centrally determined tasks.

As discussed earlier, waqf institutions are by definition founded by persons, and for a waqf to be established in the name of an office or as part of central state mechanisms is unheard of. In that sense, Social Solidarity Vakıfs, as state-founded, impersonal redistribution tools, are an aberration. Given their current operations, it is also hard to suggest that they function like awaqf at all. So the choice of designation for an institution of this type and legal status is truly striking. Why would a state claiming to be a modern welfare state choose a gift-giving institution to regulate its welfare

provision activities, even though in practice it does not want to relegate any autonomous entity? The answer to this question is hidden in the social imaginary that defines legitimate and socially approved ways of providing aid and welfare in Turkey. The Turkish state, after a long fight against the institution and a decent amount of effort to create modern and Westernised ties between itself and its citizens, entered the welfare arena the only way it historically knows how: the waqf. These state vakıfs show us how entrenched the institution is and how strong the imaginary of caring for needy members of society through civic initiatives. In its first attempt at being an inclusive social welfare state, the Turkish Republic resorted to the very social citizenship institution it had aimed to abolish.

Welfare Provision as a Personal Act

Social Solidarity Vakıfs illustrate how the institution of the waqf and its historical functions haunt the Turkish state on matters of social citizenship. When the welfare of its citizens became an issue to be tackled, the social and institutional memory of the state came up with the same system that had fulfilled similar needs for centuries. Even though the end product is far from loyal to the essential features of the waqf, this institutional choice is still indicative that it is alive in the imaginary. In this final section I will delve into the matter a little more and try to trace a certain characteristic of the waqf in today's welfare politics. I will also briefly describe a historical period with which we can draw some parallels and observe the same characteristics at work.

In his speech on 25 December 2007 about the distribution of coal to families in need, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan said, 'My esteemed Governor, my esteemed Provincial

Governor, you need to get on the truck, take the driver's seat, and go there if need be. You ring the doorbell and hand out the coal and the stove yourself. The day you do that, Turkey shall fly high' (AKP İletişim Merkezi 2012). He has repeated the same sentences in various contexts, sometimes in criticism of the self-conception of the state and bureaucracy, other times while introducing new policies, but always to point out a transformation in the state structure, as well as the image of the state in Turkey. The figure of the centrally appointed governor who does not hesitate to enter the house of a poor family, who serves people personally, who shows up in the most deprived parts of cities as the representative of the benevolent state and as a person with compassion for the inhabitants of those neighbourhoods has been positioned, in Erdoğan's speeches, in direct contrast with the faceless bureaucrat who feels no personal responsibility to the people, who does not leave, as he put it, 'his ivory tower' to see the extent of the poverty all around; a representative of a state which is itself distant, detached, oppressive, and even hostile.

Erdoğan's words not only reveal an acknowledgement of state's responsibility towards maintaining the welfare of its citizens, but also prescribes a very specific way of performing this duty: gift-giving. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the coal to be distributed by the local governors is actually among the holdings of the Social Solidarity Vakıfs in every town. The personalistic aspect of the waqf as an institution of gift-giving allows and informs governors to be personally involved in their operations. The language of the gift colours the discourse of welfare in many ways. Erdoğan is not the first political figure to employ this language when presenting a welfare provision, neither is he the only one criticised for it. Right after the Ottoman welfare regime that had been built around the institution was made obsolete, the Ottoman Sultan

Abdulhamid II established a similarly personalistic welfare regime. His example may provide insight into the developments of today.

Nadir Özbek (2002) provides an analysis of welfare and social state policies in the Abdulhamid II (1876–1908) and the subsequent *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy, 1908–1918) eras. By placing these two time periods within the same framework, he goes against the conventional views of Ottoman History, that Abdulhamid and *Meşrutiyet* mark two totally separate, indeed contrasting eras with distinct dominant ideals, power regimes, aspirations and political climates. In most accounts, the Abdulhamid era is described with terms like stagnancy, backwardness and conservatism, while *Meşrutiyet* is characterised with the feeling of dynamic modernisation (see for example Berkes 1964). Özbek rather argues that these two epochs of the Ottoman Empire are indicative of continuity in the path towards modernisation, and in the construction of the modern state as being responsible for the welfare of the population. The waqf system had already been made obsolete before Abdulhamid, so in his wide-ranging welfare provision, other models and systems were used, just as in the *Meşrutiyet* era. But there is also a breach, a rupture that, I argue, still marks our discussions about welfare. This rupture is not institutional, but discursive and related to a shift of imaginary.

According to Özbek, Abdulhamid's welfare regime had a personalistic and benevolent appearance despite the fact that it did not make much use of the waqf. These aspects of his welfare provision helped him create and maintain the legitimacy of his 33-year reign. This particular regime relied not only on the personal charity of the sultan but also on the mass mobilisation Abdulhamid personally triggered to provide for the

population. Schools were built in the remotest villages, the first poor house/shelter of the Empire was founded, as was a well-equipped modern children's hospital. Charities of all sorts that were affiliated with various ethnic and religious groups flourished with the support of the sultan. Mass circumcision ceremonies were held in Istanbul for the sons of the urban poor, while Abdulhamid himself sent presents to the new graduates of primary schools in provincial towns. A welfare benefit/income support wage (*Maaş-ı Fukara*) was issued to help the poor, who were not considered to be fallen or degraded in moral terms, but simply in need of help to survive. This complicated system of welfare effectively bypassed any impersonal bureaucracy and maintained its personal outlook until the end.

As I have mentioned, Abdulhamid, unlike his predecessors, did not establish waqf institutions to execute his public duties. With the system centralised and financially crippled, his choice does not necessarily reflect a shared disdain towards the institution on his part; quite the contrary, it might be read as bypassing bureaucracy to carry on with two important features of the waqf: its personalistic element and its autonomy. Özbek argues that this particular strategy of power 'resulted in the "over-personalization" of rulership in the Ottoman Empire', which came to mean carrying on the personal, paternalistic and unbureaucratic aspect of the monarchy (2003, 206).

When the suspended parliament finally started to work again and the constitutional monarchy was declared in 1908, one of the first actions taken was against this complex system of welfare, which was seen as a source of legitimacy and popular support for the sultan. Financial resources were cut, all separately maintained and supported welfare institutions (like hospitals, shelters, orphanages) were nationalised/centralised, various

laws were issued to criminalise begging and idleness among the poor and the entire welfare system was bureaucratised. Aspirations for modernisation were present during both regimes, although Meşrutiyet governments differed from Abdulhamid's reign in that their search for legitimacy occurred increasingly with reference to the nation, in resonance with the bureaucratic secular nation-state formations in the West. Secular Republican ideals implying a reliance on personal sovereignty and representational democracy could not tolerate the informal, personalistic and religiously expressed welfare regime of the Abdulhamid era. With very little in the way of resources in the war-ridden country and separatist movements all over the Empire, in effect, this did not represent the replacement of one system with another but the loss of the actual welfare establishments.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Ottoman state was trying to establish itself as a modern (perceived as Western) state responsible for the well-being of its citizens and therefore the sole provider of social services (Özbek 2002). But the personalistic aspect of the waqf survived into this period, even when the institution was paralysed. Although waqfs were no longer being established, Ottoman rulers like Abdulhamid and notables continued investing in civic gifts for welfare provision, which were to be known as personal endowments. These gifts did not connect the populations to their rulers in the terms of modern citizenship but through relations of reciprocity. They therefore relied on an understanding of both rulers and citizens as persons rather than as representatives of an impersonal state office and the faceless masses comprising a population to be governed.

Coming back to Erdoğan, we can observe a reference to this particular notion of rulers and citizens, between whom gift is a primary mechanism of legitimation, and being a 'just' ruler is an important criterion of this legitimacy. Erdoğan and 'his governors' provide welfare services within terms of gift relations and revitalise certain aspects of the waqf as institutionalised gift-giving. This is not to argue that Erdoğan makes a deliberate effort to find out about these features and revive the institution; instead, he is operating in a terrain of terms and solutions that are readily available to him. The imaginary that has developed around the institution of waqf, which is itself a form of gift-giving, haunts available discourses, vocabulary and horizons of imagination.

Conclusion

An institutional way of showing the responsibilities of citizenship and endowing the polity, the waqf tells us about ways of understanding welfare provision that are not necessarily limited to the market or the state. It is better understood through the lens of gift-giving, and in this institutionalised form waqf interpellates the givers (Isin 2005). It therefore outlines the framework for legitimate and socially appropriate ways of giving, and creates legal and socially recognisable subjects. Waqf founders, workers, benefactors, and beneficiaries are all situated within this framework and thus have certain accompanying entitlements and responsibilities. In that sense the waqf is both a source of social citizenship and a tool of welfare provision.

In this chapter I have focused my interest in particular on two features of the waqf. The first is its indifference to distinctions made between public and private. I have argued that the institution blurs the boundaries between self-interest and the public benefit,

salvation of the soul and the well-being of the community; or better said, it interweaves these strands into an institutional and legal form. The second feature that has found emphasis in this chapter is its nature as personal endowment. The waqf is built on personalistic relations that situate human beings not as anonymous individuals assembled as a population, but as persons with well-defined positions in society. The importance of this feature will once again come to the surface when I discuss the significance of networks in Chapter 5.

In the second half of this chapter, I focused my interest on the contemporary apparitions of the waqf in the welfare scene of Turkey. I suggested that, consciously or not, the waqf's characteristic features haunt the discourses and practices of those who are involved in welfare provision in Turkey. However it is important to note that this account is specific to the Turkish case and does not necessarily apply anywhere else the institution of waqf has existed as a structural element of public life. In the Arab countries, for example, Jawad argues that the waqf 'is but a spectre of its former self in terms of its social orientation towards public benefit' (2009b, 49), because centralisation and confiscation had taken place contemporaneously across the Ottoman Empire. Yet elsewhere, for example in Bangladesh, the waqf system is still functioning, and nearly all mosques and religious establishments in the country stand on endowed land (Sadeq 2002, 141). In Palestine, though, the institution recently acquired a completely new and radically political meaning when ' Hamas expanded the meaning of waqf to include an entire land with well-delimited territorial boundaries—historic Palestine, from the River to the Sea' (Aburaiya 2009, 63). With this move Hamas claimed that Palestinian land does not belong to its present occupier but to God, and therefore to Muslim generations to follow. All these examples illustrate that the present day condition of the waqf as an

institution and as an imaginary varies greatly among predominantly Muslim countries, let alone those with Muslim minorities, and a comprehensive study to investigate the issue transnationally is very much needed.

The waqf's significance stems from the fact that all these discourses and practices pose a significant challenge to the all-or-nothing approaches that dominate recent welfare discussions. The waqf introduces the concept of the gift back into political economy, which is often thought of in terms of commodity transaction and redistribution. In the coming chapters, I will direct my interest to daily practices of contemporary vakıfs in a specific location, which will give us a greater opportunity to see how the gift marks and shapes these practices.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Throughout this research my main method of inquiry has been ethnography. Equipped with its methodological tools, I completed extensive participant observation at three vakıfs in Kayseri. I spent a total of eight months in two phases between August 2008 and August 2009, working in these organisations, and joining their workers both in the work environment and outside it. My aim was to be as close as possible to the actors who play the intermediary role between donors and beneficiaries in order to be able to observe the minute details of decision-making, registering, giving and receiving. This chapter will disclose the particulars of this experience, as well as the tensions that accompanied the process.

Doing ethnography means paying 'attention to the contingent ways in which all social categories emerge, become naturalised, and intersect in people's conception of themselves and their world, and further, an emphasis on how these categories are produced through everyday practice' (Rofel 1994, 703). My aim throughout the ethnographic fieldwork was to grasp the social categories and recurring practices that emerge during encounters surrounding welfare provision in the setting of Kayseri vakıfs. Ethnography granted me close contact, a gradually educated eye and various opportunities to use my whole body as a learning tool. I preferred ethnography over other qualitative data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, or video-

recordings, because only ethnography made such proximity attainable. Ethnographic findings linger between the natives' view and the researcher's analytic deductions, and this is what makes it a superior methodological tool if the researcher aims to focus on practice more than discourse.

Ethnographic method (in this case its most well-known subject: participant observation) presumes that prolonged day-to-day contact with any cultural phenomenon is the best way to understand it. Being alert to everything happening in a setting without dismissing the most ordinary, the most that-goes-without-saying features of daily occurrence—rather paying particular attention to them to understand the most mundane operations of culture/power—are key to ethnography. To put it more eloquently with a quote from Clifford Geertz,

The important thing about the anthropologist's findings is their complex specificness, their circumstantiality. It is with the kind of material produced by long-term, mainly (though not exclusively) qualitative, highly participative, and almost obsessively fine-comb field study in confined contexts that the mega-concepts with which contemporary social science is afflicted—legitimacy, modernisation, integration, conflict, charisma, structure... meaning—can be given the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely about them, but, what is more important, creatively and imaginatively with them. (1975, 23)

Approaching ethnography in this way, as a creative and imaginative task undertaken in collaboration with research participants, is rejecting the assumption of any transparent transcription of culture; I recognise that ethnography is a practice of 'writing culture', making, interpreting and fixing it (Clifford and Marcus 1986). I also recognise that ethnographic practice and writing have to be aware of their own location and relatedness to the world, the awareness itself reflecting some of the symbolic and structural positioning of all human subjects, all human experience. And also as an

inscription practice, writing ethnographic accounts is a continuation of fieldwork rather than a transparent record of past experiences in the field. Writing in general is itself a method of inquiry (Richardson 2000), and ethnography in particular is inquiry through 'thick description' (Geertz 1975). Any description is a description done by someone, and therefore tells not only about the occasion/setting described but also about the enquirer, the narrator. The narrator's/ethnographer's gaze is immanent in the description but subject to change, to be re-located by what is seen and what is learned. What then is at stake is a continuous deconstruction and remaking of the researcher's position, negotiating it with informants and destabilising it throughout the process (Rose 1997).

Therefore, methodological choices in ethnographic studies are unavoidably affected by the shifting positioning of the researcher. In the next section, I will discuss the significance of my own position on the research project I have undertaken. The focus of the discussion will be on issues of being an insider or an outsider, or better said, the conditions and predicaments of strangeness.

The Perils of the Inside

The advantages and disadvantages of being an insider to the culture and people studied is a well-explored theme in anthropology (Headland et al. 1990; Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt 2008; Behar 1997). A critique of the simplistic assumption that being an insider leads to a more subjective account while being an outsider guarantees objectivity is also very well developed (see for example Peirano 1998; Labaree 2002). In this section, my aim is not to produce another account to illustrate how these assumptions can be challenged by ethnographic experience. Instead my question

addresses the assumed contrast of the insider versus the outsider itself: How can we determine whether a person is an insider to a culture or an outsider? Does shared religion or nationality automatically qualify one as an insider? Or, are the qualifications that lead to admission much more complex and numerous than these?

At first sight, a Turkish woman, born and raised as a Muslim, could well be assumed to be an insider in a religiously conservative Anatolian town. Yet, this was true for me only to a certain extent. Certainly, I knew the language spoken in Kayseri to a level of perfection, which allowed me great ease both in participation and observation; and I was well equipped with the religious and cultural codes to help me navigate the field without creating great disturbances. Yet in many other matters, I was a total stranger—strange and foreign in more than one respect. I was an anomaly as a married woman travelling and living alone. My husband was a thousand kilometres away, working on his own project. My research participants incessantly asked me why I had not accompanied him to wherever he was. At least he could have been around to keep an eye on me. But he only came to Kayseri once and only because I deeply felt the need to prove that he really existed. I was also an anomaly as a student at the age of 29, well beyond the normal graduation age. People were also suspicious about my lighter colouring, who could have easily passed as a white European. All in all I was not easily assigned to the category of ‘one of us’.

Besides being seen as a stranger I was actually feeling truly strange myself too. Kayseri, a city of tall concrete buildings, large boulevards, poor public transportation—especially in the evenings—and of very few places to go out on your own was a lot more foreign to me than London. Being socialised in certain ways in metropolitan

environments, the home-centred life in Kayseri depressed me to a great degree. This sense of alienation was doubled given that I did not actually have a home or any friends there. So most evenings, after the people I interacted with as part of my fieldwork had gone to their families and moved onto another phase of human interaction, I was bound to my room, sitting alone with my notebook, laptop and TV, with five or six hours to pass before going to bed. The life I lived in Kayseri was one of an outsider, having nothing to contribute when people shared the events of the evening before, stories about their guests or their children's troubles. My life outside fieldwork was a void with the exception of a few phone calls and painfully long hours spent in front of a computer screen, taking field notes and doing transcriptions. Gradually, however, I overcame this strangeness—both in the eyes of others and within myself—but only to a degree. Still, it was enough to gain a Bourdieuan 'practical sense', a sense of the game.

When I went to Kayseri my initial contacts were acquaintances of my mother, who had visited the town to give a talk in 2002. She was invited by a friend of hers, the late Nevin Akyurt, who had been a very prominent figure in the field of beneficence in Kayseri, and who will be a subject of discussion later in this thesis too. To these early contacts I was so-and-so's daughter who chose Kayseri to do her research. But for the great majority of the people I worked with I was simply a young woman who had come from London with a vaguely defined task called 'research'. Kayseri had had visitors from European countries in the form of journalists and businessmen, but I did not belong to either of these categories and the way I wanted to conduct my research was unlike the way journalists prepared their stories. Namely, I was not particularly interested in meeting town notables or learning the secrets to the city's industrial success. So who was I?

It is very common in Turkey to think believe others to be spies. Some state officials I met with were self-confident enough to ask openly whether it was the British government that had asked me to conduct this research. 'I am funded by a British university but I chose my own topic and this is my project', I replied. They were so unsatisfied with this answer that they did not even bother to discuss it any further. I was even recorded in the phone book of a middle-aged man as 'the British Spy' only half ironically. He had a particular talent for figuring out people's insecurities and playing on them; mine was easy to guess, and he kept pushing that button. I remember one particularly embarrassing incident: He was the director of one of the important vakıfs of the city and his organisation was invited to a collaborative meeting at the governor's office, along with some others. He kindly invited me to join them and observe the meeting and I happily accepted, until after the meeting, he introduced me to the director of another organisation just like this: 'This blonde lady has come from England to research us.' I rushed to get hold of the conversation and started to explain what I was doing there, but as I was mumbling about my research topic this guy persisted with his witty comments: 'See how good her Turkish is! She is really well trained!' I was now a British spy good enough at Turkish to pretend to be Turkish... I gave up and laughed the situation off, hoping to find another chance to meet with this other director. Although most of it was mockery there was certainly an element of sincere distrust embedded in this incident and its subtler likes.

So I found myself in a setting where everybody approached me politely, but always with reservation. On the extreme I was seen as a spy, but most often I was simply a stranger and as a result, a source of suspicion. My attempts to overcome this by talking about my project describing my life and myself were usually received with polite nods,

which did little for my peace of mind. Yet I eventually established very solid, reliable and enriching relations with many of the people working and volunteering at vakıfs. Looking back, I figure that if half of this accomplishment was owed to long-term contact, the other half at least had something to do with my own readiness to change and viscerally learn the subtle codes of their behaviour.

As my research methodology involved volunteering at vakıfs and taking part in their activities, I slowly learnt the grammar of vakıf workers' ethos, their vocabulary, idioms and more importantly the pillars of argumentation about what was just and what was unjust. So I began making sound comments about daily events and challenging opinions that I did not agree with, within this vocabulary. I began speaking their language. Yet, acquiring the language skills to operate within that ethos was certainly not the hardest task nor the most valuable asset. Rather, I would say, my bodily and habitual formation affected my relationship with the men and women of these organisations more than anything.

In order to clarify this point I may recount a particular day at Erciyes Feneri. It was one of the clothing distribution days in December 2008. During this period Erciyes Feneri staff and volunteers were working round the clock and at weekends to be able to supply all registered beneficiaries with new clothes before the approaching religious festivities. Erciyes Feneri clothes distributions normally took place twice or three times a year, and provided the setting for the organisation's most intimate contact between volunteers, workers and beneficiaries. The idea was to invite the beneficiaries and all members of their households so that everybody would receive apparel suitable to their sizes and tastes. Because serving 40–50 families a day was a laborious task, and also because

female beneficiaries would not want to discuss their sizes and styles with male workers, the organisations' female volunteers were very active during these periods.

Until that day I had always been welcome at female volunteers' meetings, but I still occupied a rather strange position among them and was not necessarily invited to work with them. So when I offered my weekends to help during distribution they didn't add my name to the list of volunteers but did tell me I would be welcome. I went. My months of volunteering at Erciyes Feneri had actually made me more knowledgeable about the whereabouts of certain items than many other female volunteers, so after a while, they assigned me the task of finding correct shoe sizes for beneficiaries. I found shoes, asked if they liked them and helped them try the shoes on. Later, during the lunch break, when I approached the back room where volunteer women gathered to eat, I overheard them talking about me. One was saying, with apparent surprise: 'Have you seen how this girl from London touched the dirty, muddy feet of those kids? She was smiling and chatting with them all time!' The others concurred with the assessment of how extraordinary the situation was, certainly to my surprise. When I entered the room they stopped the conversation but welcomed me with visible congeniality and appreciation. All through the preceding months, I had been observed, assessed and now finally accepted with the help of a pair of tiny muddy feet. These little feet became the signs of my conformity to their norms and values, and hence a shared ethical stance.

The incident during the clothes distribution was actually a misreading on the part of the volunteers. What they interpreted as a hallmark of my transformation to become like them was quite an ordinary act for me. My physical boundaries had been differently shaped, and touching the muddy foot of a child would not be the source of disturbance

for me under any conditions. Nevertheless, I appreciated realising that I had finally met their expectations and standards to be let in. What had made rapport and intimacy between us possible was not my verbal explanations, but my bodily reactions, which illustrated how much I had become like them.

Therefore, I can contend that overcoming my strangeness required an effort not only to be *seen* as one of them but also to really *become* one of them. I had chosen to put forward this effort partly because of my need for acceptance, but more importantly because of its methodological value and relevance. When I went to Kayseri, informed by critical anthropologists (Altorki 1988; Abu-Lughod 1999; Mahmood 2005) and feminist scholars (Stanley and Wise 1993; Cixous 1996; Weedon 1997), I was determined to foster such a level of intimacy that I would understand the processes involved in the self-formation of my research participants through my own experience of these processes. Developing this intimacy meant rendering myself docile and letting my body learn the codes.

In the final chapter I explore the ethical transformation of the women and men who take part in the activities of charitable organisations in Kayseri. There I argue that ethical transformation has an intrinsic bodily aspect and, in some instances, it is actually this that precedes the intention of transformation. This embodied transformation requires a level of docility that gives subjects' bodies plasticity and malleability. Docility and ethical self-formation, as such, do not only present theoretical and empirical aspects of this project. Instead, they signify important research processes. In Kayseri I also experienced a transformation, a very particular self-formation, one certainly resembling that of the people about whom I write.

Looking back now, I can see the docility with which I rendered myself to the people I admired and respected there. I let them affect me, shape my attitudes, and teach me by setting an example. I also disciplined myself by trying, sometimes very hard, to act like the person I wanted to become. So for me, just like them, working there was part of an ethical self-formation. And just like them again, I got tired, I had regrets, I developed conflicting attitudes and thought over and over again about my reactions. I pushed myself to be more patient when I felt the urge to scold somebody for a mistake. I had to struggle to keep my smile intact and my attitude always genial after ten hours of hard work. I had to act with humility in order to gain humility—in order to be humble, not the other way around. I personally experienced the hardship involved, especially the hardship of sustaining behaviour while consciously or unconsciously waiting to change.

This attitude was my response to a combination the expectations of the people I worked with and my own research strategy. The expectations were there for those who knew my mother, even if barely. She was a good reference for me at the beginning but at the same time in their eyes she set the standard for my moral and societal standing. It took me a while to be known with my own name, not just as so-and-so's daughter. But more importantly, as I said, I was eager to walk the way they led me, to be perceptive as a child and responsive as a disciple because while doing ethnography, I figured that my research tools were not limited to my sound recorder, notebook and cognitive skills. My body could be a tool too and its capacities were not limited to seeing and listening. It could teach me a great deal if I chose to be adaptive and step back from my privileged yet cramped observation tower. In the next section, I will discuss how senses are hierarchically distributed according to their contribution to knowledge and understanding, and the possibilities of using the body in its entirety as a learning device.

Ethnography: Seeing or Becoming

According to Walter Ong (1969) senses are hierarchically ordered in different ways in different cultures. In Western literate cultures vision has a primacy over the truths of sound, taste, touch and smell. Hence, what is seen is considered to have a greater truth-value than knowledge acquired via other senses. Looking at the evidence coming from various cultures, Bloch (2008) suggests that the dominance of vision is not unique to Western epistemology. It is not necessarily universal, but certainly generalisable. He gives an example of the epistemology of the Zafimaniry of Madagascar, detailing how they equate sight with truth and language with the potential for deceit. Limiting the discussion to sight and hearing, Bloch does not touch upon other senses.

Whether it is generalisable or unique to Western culture, the primacy of sight has long been established in social science writing. Viewing evidence, reading texts, witnessing events and observing happenings have not only been the techniques of natural scientists but also of ethnographers in their trademark method: participant observation. When Geertz (1972) compared culture with a drama to be read above the native's shoulder, he emphasised the role of the ethnographer as the reader who has the privilege of being close enough but still outside the text, such that it can be impartially read as it unfolds before his or her own eyes.

James Clifford (1986) provides a detailed account of attempts to challenge the primacy given to sight in anthropological tradition. He pays particular attention to those who think of the representation of culture as 'poetics that is an interplay of voices, of positioned utterances', and hence understood through a discursive paradigm rather than

a visual one (p. 12). According to Clifford, these efforts brought about a shift away from the much-criticised ethnographic gaze (which is seen as the hallmark of an assumed divide between subjects and objects, and also of the unequal power balance between the ethnographer and the people studied) toward expressive speech. With this shift, the author's voice is recognised as one among many and therefore its claim to an 'objective, distancing rhetoric is denounced' (p. 12).

Clifford's examples are mostly about the writing stage of ethnography. However, my own problems with primacy of sight informed me during the process of fieldwork itself even more than it did during writing. Or better said, once such primacy is cracked during fieldwork, it may not be re-established on paper. My experience of fieldwork, in ways that had only partly been anticipated, taught me to be perceptive to data that cannot be observed; that is, by seeing alone. By this, I do not mean being open to listening (which goes without saying when it comes to social science methodologies); I suggest taking very seriously the issue of participation within the method of participant observation, even such that one's body learns without being fully conscious of the process; one's hands know where to rest and how to grasp without deliberate imitation of others' movements; one's skin, nose and even taste buds become active tools in making sense of the social world. All these can be subsumed under the more general title of learning to live, and they often cannot be avoided. What my fieldwork experience taught me is the importance of recognising these processes and valuing the data they provide. This means acknowledging that ethnography is a bodily practice, where the body of the researcher in its entirety becomes a tool of research.

Lila Abu-Lughod (1988) recounts an illuminating incident from her fieldwork among the Bedouins of Egypt, one which then showed her how much she had internalised the values of her hosts and how this internalisation had helped her develop a fruitful analysis afterwards. During the two years she spent with the Awlad Ali Bedouins, she was hosted by a prominent figure of the tribe and eventually became accepted as a member of his household. As a woman with Arab roots, she eventually found it more comforting and also more strategically feasible to be the 'dutiful daughter' of her host family, welcoming the boundaries such a role imposed on her as much as the opportunities it created. She even sincerely wanted to become like the persons she admired during her stay there. One day while they were preparing a feast and she was cleaning rice for cooking, she accidentally found herself in a position of embarrassment: 'face to face with a dignified old man, not a relative' her face uncovered. She blushed deeply and ran into the nearest doorway. After describing this incident in an article she comments:

It was at this moment, when I felt naked before an Arab elder because I could not veil, that I understood viscerally that women veil not because anyone tells them to or because they would be punished if they did not, but because they feel extremely uncomfortable in the presence of certain categories of men. Veiling becomes an automatic response to embarrassment, both a sign of it and a way of coping with it. This and my other experiences trying to live as a modest daughter were... essential to the development of my analysis of modesty and women's veiling. (1988, 155)

Somewhat similar to Abu-Lughod's experience, my volition to self-transformation improved my understanding of the practices common at Kayseri vakıfs. Chapters 5, 6 and especially 7 exhibit this understanding, which would have been impossible to intimate without such in-depth involvement. This also led to a gradual improvement of my relationships with the people I worked with in the field. So, I can contend that the social distance created by where I came from, my vocation and my class origins were

somewhat abridged by the growing moral closeness between us. Changes in my attitude, posture, and boundaries, as well as my opinions, vocabulary and argumentation contributed both to the possibility of research and to the knowledge I acquired during this process.

Estrangement versus intimacy

The methodology I have outlined above would probably horrify a natural scientist (or anyone with positivist inclinations), because of the blurriness between the objects of the study and the subject conducting the research. Neither does ethnography provide an easy escape from the epistemological questions of objectivity and objectification at the centre of positivist disciplines. Quite on the contrary, participant observation as an ethnographic social science methodology is almost an embodiment of these questions. Keane argues that 'ethnographic knowledge has always been marked by a tension between epistemologies of estrangement and of intimacy' (2005, 62). These two epistemologies cannot easily be contrasted against each other, with the former as the bearer of positivist arguments and the latter as the source of particularism and relativism. Instead, they share common assumptions regarding freedom and human agency, and have been adopted at different levels and in different traditions of anthropology. Yet they are both there, in every writing, every piece of research. Following Keane's formulation I can suggest that swinging between these two epistemologies, hence learning through the most intimate contact and making not only what you have seen but your own personal experience material for further analysis, is at the heart of ethnography.

This tension between the two different epistemologies can also be read as an implication of (although not perfectly mapped onto) the classic home/field divide in anthropology. In their seminal edition, *Anthropological Locations* (1997a), Gupta and Ferguson, in unison with their contributors, show the uses and limits of this divide, and most importantly its implications in creating hierarchies between various types of ethnographic work. They illustrate the well-established and unspoken premise of anthropology, wherein 'home' is a 'place of cultural sameness and that difference is to be found "abroad"' (1997b, 32). The book itself undertakes the task of showing how 'home' is, from the start, actually a place of difference—shaped by gender, class, sexuality, and race—and how 'field' does not have to be a place that is travelled to. As they suggest in their introduction, field and home are both to be uprooted if ethnography's great strength of being located is not to become a liability, as happens 'when notions of "here" and "elsewhere" are assumed to be features of geography, rather than sites constructed in fields of unequal power relations' (ibid. 35). They go on to suggest:

Fieldwork reveals that a self-conscious shifting of social and geographical location can be an extraordinarily valuable methodology for understanding social and cultural life, both through the discovery of phenomena that would otherwise remain invisible and through the acquisition of new perspectives on things we thought we already understood. Fieldwork, in this light, may be understood as a form of motivated and stylised dislocation. (ibid. 37)

This motivated and stylised dislocation does not have to be a one-off journey that starts with travelling to the field and ends with a story of exit. Instead, there is a shuttling between 'home' and 'field' within even an hour during fieldwork if we are to stick to another—and simpler—metaphor and approach 'field' as the location of experience and 'home' as the location of analysis, regardless of their geographical sites. In that sense 'field' can be seen as where epistemologies of intimacy reign, while 'home' would be

where you shift to estrangement. And both are implied in the fieldwork; they co-existent, since there would be no purified data collection moment which is not informed by a hint of epistemological estrangement and vice versa. The shift is unavoidable and valuable, and it should be recognised and appreciated, for it is the insurance against both going native or remaining a stranger forever.

Methodological Focus

So far, I have discussed various aspects of my position vis-a-vis my research participants in the field. In this section I will reflect on how I drew the boundaries of this research and focused my interest on some people and processes rather than others. There are two very important issues to be discussed in this context, although the list is not exhaustive. The first issue is about my research choices regarding on whom and what to focus. Below, I will discuss how I came to direct my interest primarily on the intermediaries, i.e. vakıfçıs, instead of the beneficiaries or benefactors, and on how this choice affected the findings. The second issue stems from a very important but not-yet-discussed dimension of my subject position: gender. In order to illustrate how gender relations shaped the boundaries of this research I will describe how my initial research plan had to be substantially revised once I began fieldwork.

Delimiting the field

Roughly categorised, there are three types of actors in the field of beneficence in Kayseri: a) the vakıf benefactors, b) the intermediaries who work at vakıfs either voluntarily or on salary, and c) the beneficiaries who receive aid and services from these vakıfs. The following chapters will complicate this categorisation, however it is

beneficial to stick with it in this section for analytical purposes. This research focuses on the intermediary group and often black-boxed processes of mediation between donors and beneficiaries.

Beneficence is often understood as the straightforward process of donating for the well-being of the needy members of a society. However these donations rarely reach those who need it directly. There are often institutions, processes and people who pass the donation on, though not without affecting it. Beneficiaries come to these institutions, are subjected to the intermediary processes and interact with the employees or volunteers of vakıfs. Therefore, beneficence is not a singular process in which goods and services flow uni-directionally, but rather is a web in which a multitude of services and goods are carried between nodes.

In this web, vakıf workers occupy significant nodes where the power to decide who receives what resides. This position embeds vakıf workers deeply into a variety of gift relationships with both the benefactors and the beneficiaries. At the same time, they devote their time, energy, connections and sometimes financial resources to vakıf work and therefore actively give gifts themselves. In both situations, they are far from being simple vessels, their discourse sets the limits of possibility in the field, their decisions affect the livelihood of beneficiaries and their practices have both ethical and material consequences.

I have designed this research with the aim of gaining maximum access to the day-to-day work of mediation. Doing participant observation has proved to be highly effective towards reaching this goal. By living and working with vakıf workers I have acquired an intimate knowledge of their practices, language, relations, fields of influence,

interactions, networks and transformations, as discussed in previous sections. However, for the overall comprehension of the gift circuits and the web of beneficence, the research had to be complemented with data about the benefactors and beneficiaries as well. I have had ample chance to observe these two groups in their interactions with vakıf people and at the moments of gift exchange. I was able to take note of the variety of ways they responded to vakıf workers: most of the time they were amenable to entering the vakıf workers' game and playing according to the rules. Yet occasionally, there were some who defied the unspoken rules, challenged the decisions, refused to give or accept gifts. Moments of contact were rife with possibilities.

These observations have earned me insight into the perspectives of the benefactors and the beneficiaries; however, I cannot claim to have achieved a full understanding. My observations remained limited to the moment of encounter. What happened before or after was beyond my reach. In order to overcome this anticipated limitation I developed a number of complementary strategies to my initial research plan. These included participant observation among the benefactors in the form of attending their informal but regular meetings in each other's homes, which was expected to give me access to gift circuits among the wealthy donors, as well as to their decision-making processes. Unfortunately, these gatherings proved inaccessible for me, for the material and structural reasons that are discussed in the following subsection. However, as I initially planned, I conducted interviews with the benefactors and founders of vakıfs and asked about their motivations, as well as their self-reflections (more detail on these interviews is given in the *Complementary Research Strategies* section).

My relationship with the beneficiaries was more complicated. I had initially planned to conduct interviews with them. However, I was already sceptical about this strategy and it proved to be of very little use. I conducted seven preliminary interviews with the beneficiaries of one of the organisations I worked with, and had countless opportunities to chat informally with them as they waited their turn to apply for or receive provisions. I told them openly about what I was doing there, then enquired about their lives in general and listened to their stories of hardship. But whenever the conversation reached the point at which I asked them about the experience of receiving aid, my interviewees turned timid. In their eyes, I was closely connected with these organisations, and regardless of how hard I tried, I couldn't successfully distance myself from the vakıfs. My questions intimidated them, as they had already been subject to serious questioning before their applications were approved. Their responses were not addressed to me but to the organisation to which they were registered, such that even as they voiced criticism they also expressed gratitude. I was unable to get them genuinely talking to me and to me only.

In any case, as a believer in the strengths of ethnographic methods, I would not have considered interviews sufficient to serve the goals of this research. Participant observation would be necessary, which would mean observing the beneficiaries' daily survival strategies, tactical moves to improve their own conditions and decision-making processes leading to developing preferences for one organisation over another, as well as listening to their comments about vakıf workers, about their encounters with them, about vakıf admission criteria and so on. And such a task could only be accomplished if I had not begun my research by working with vakıfs. I would have needed to start over, in a place no one formally associated me with a vakıf. Moreover, the time span of

research available for the project was insufficient to attempt to conduct these two separate but intimately related ethnographies. Still, it would be ideal and this side of the story deserves to be told in a future project.

Gender matters

While I was planning this research, I noticed a particular emphasis given to the semi-formal in-home gatherings for which Kayseri was famous. In the rare social scientific writing on Kayseri these semi-formal home visits (*oturma*, literally ‘sitting’, as they call it in Kayseri) were identified as an important site of politics and decision-making processes (ESI 2005; Doğan 2007). Both publications describe *oturma* as a private gathering in which public matters are debated between the elites of the town, especially among men. In my preliminary visit to Kayseri, I was told that even the decision to establish another university had been taken at one of these gatherings.

Given the importance of these visits and my aspiration to access charitable networks in the city, I initially planned to attend several of these *oturmas* and to do participant observation within the circles in which beneficence was organised. I was aware that *oturma* was strictly a gender segregated get-together, and I was intrigued by the fact that none of the publications mentioned the other room where women gathered. I was therefore hoping to grasp this missing part of the story in depth, but also to be accepted into men’s room as an ‘honorary male’ because of my researcher identity. All of these assumptions and expectations proved non-viable after I spent some time in Kayseri and learned more about the culture of *oturma*. As reported, the environment was gender segregated, and this segregation was not only spatial but temporal. While a men’s

gathering took place in one house, the women of that household were responsible for serving guests. Women's oturmas would always take place during daytime and were strictly bound by time regulations imposed on the women by their husbands' working hours, such that no men would be present where and when a women's gathering was taking place. As a result of this system, it was out of the question for me to be invited to men's oturmas where decisions important for my research were taken.

Unaware of the nature of the meetings, for a while, I assumed that I had not been invited due to issues of trust or rapport. Only later did I figure out that a structural obstacle existed that I could not possibly overcome, or even make an attempt to overcome. A young Turkish woman who is overly interested in men's gatherings would only arouse further suspicion, which could in turn harm my access to women's activities as well. So I had to accept these norms and change my research strategies accordingly.

Making such an alterations to research decisions is common among the experiences of other researchers too. Similar examples about how gender played both a limiting and an enhancing role in research experiences can be found in contributions to Altorki and El-Solh's collection *Arab Women in the Field* (1988). For example, Shami (1988) details how she gained access to the impoverished slum neighbourhood of el-Wadi in Amman, Jordan through the special care she paid to operating within the moral boundaries of the locality. This required limited her interaction with the male residents but allowed her an in-depth comprehension of the women's world. Similar accounts are provided by Altorki (1988) and Abu-Lughod (1988) regarding their experiences in Saudi Arabia and Egypt respectively.

The gendered boundaries that I came across during my research kept me away from the private sphere of men but allowed me access to that of women, which made it possible to collect a considerable amount of material for this research. I also experienced no difficulty accessing the public part of the men's world. In the organisational environments of the vakıfs I studied, men and women work together, so I was welcome to follow men on their daily tasks, take long rides with them, go on home visits, load and unload vans, sort clothing and distribute coal. I also attended many meetings that took place during the day or after work hours in offices. The reason I was the only woman in most of these meetings was not an issue of segregation but rather of the limited presence of women in decision-making positions. I also conducted interviews with some of the male directors in their offices, warehouses or workshops. Some of these men were public figures, for whom my research was a confirmation of the specialness of their home town, and they were thus eager to meet me, provide me contacts and answer my questions. Ultimately, my access to men as informants was only restricted when they moved into the private spaces of their homes.

My interaction with women was more intimate. I regularly attended the weekly meetings of the female volunteers at Erciyes Feneri. I worked with them at fundraising lunches and charity fairs. We had opportunities to spend time together outside of the vakıfs. I was also invited to their fortnightly oturmas, each time in a different person's house. The director of Melikgazi Vakfı was one of my initial contacts and I travelled with her, joined her at weddings, and kept her company during her hectic workdays. I later became the welcome house guest of some of the women I met, staying over in their homes for many nights. But it was always single or widowed women who invited me

for dinner or to spend the night. All other women made sure that I left before their husbands came and their family was reunited.

In these homey and more intimate settings, I became part of women's daily housework and chatter. I witnessed the conflicts that arose between them, I heard their comments about each other's behaviour and therefore had opportunities to observe how vakıfçı subjectivities were worked on in the quotidian. Hence, gender made a big difference on the final content of this dissertation. Had I been a man I would have had different access limitations and different opportunities. I would have had to be closer to the world of the hayırsevers (philanthropists) than that of the vakıfçısı (vakıf workers), and would have produced a very different account.

The Site of Ethnography

For this research I chose three vakıfs in Kayseri. As I have described in detail above, I worked in these vakıfs, participated in their staff and board meetings, joined their employees and volunteers in their work routines and during their out-of-work hours. These three vakıfs were chosen because of the scope of their work and also because of their contrasting characteristics, as will be seen below.

All three of these vakıfs are local organisations that distribute aid (usually in kind) and provide certain welfare services to their registered beneficiaries. Their activities are limited to a particular city, Kayseri, although they occasionally send out items of need to organisations elsewhere. They are founded and run by Muslim believers (although the degree of observance varies greatly). None of the organisations have direct ties to a

particular sect or order but a few of the founders and workers are active members of one religious order or another. The organisations' beneficiaries come from all walks of life, with various lifestyles and religious orientations. Organisations are intentionally blind to these differences. Islamic discourse and terminology is widely used as a common repertoire to communicate ideas of justice, to initiate and reciprocate gift-giving and to discuss ethical problems. However I did not observe any systematic attempts to Islamicise the lifestyles of beneficiaries or educate them in religious matters. Some of the volunteers and founders have personal or familial ties to the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party), but the organisations have no direct affiliations with the party.

Erciyes Feneri

Erciyes Feneri is the largest aid-providing organisation in Kayseri. They have around a thousand households registered for receipt of regular (almost monthly) aid. The criteria for registration is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. The association has a supermarket in which no commercial transactions take place. Registered beneficiaries come to the market on their allocated days and spend their allowance on items that can be found in an ordinary supermarket, like food, detergent, nappies, tableware, etc. Beneficiaries also receive clothing twice or three times per year, and are provided with furniture and carpets if needed. All clothing, furniture and carpets are donations in kind, but most of the food items and detergents are bought by the association from suppliers that have agreed to provide them at a considerable discount on wholesale prices. In 2009, monthly supplier payments amounted to 50,000 TL (equal to around £20,000).

Erciyes Feneri also runs a public bath for those without access to hot water. Every day, approximately 50 women and children bathe in this facility and have their laundry done by the employees. Most of the clients are impoverished widows and their children, but the organisation also accepts women who are known to be in destitute in exchange for a symbolic payment that amounts to £1. Neither the electric company nor the water supplier asks for payment from the bath house. Erciyes Feneri only covers the cost of the coal used to boil water and the salaries of three workers.

Another significant activity of the association is running a soup kitchen for fast-breaking (*iftar*), during the month of Ramadan. Every year, an unused floor of a multi-storey car park is rearranged as a refectory and hosts 700–800 people per evening. Iftar patrons are poor families, working men and women who cannot make it home to break their fasts and anyone who appears outside at dusk for any reason. Because the car park is located at a busy junction where people change buses and trams, this last category makes up a significant share. Every evening a three-course meal and beverages are served to these diners. There is a fixed sponsorship rate that approximately covers an evening's expenses, so every iftar is actually paid for by someone from the Kayseri business community. Erciyes Feneri covers evenings that are not sponsored.

In total, Erciyes Feneri has 10 full-time employees (four women and six men) and around 20 active female volunteers. The association does not have a salaried director but the head of the board attends to all administrative work, as well as to purchasing and employment decisions. Erciyes Feneri expenses are covered by this businessman, a spice trader from a prominent family, and six others who make up the board. Miscellaneous donations make up a minimal share of the budget. Some additional

fundraising activities are mostly organised by female volunteers. I will discuss one particular fundraising event, the charity fair, in Chapter 5.

Melikgazi Vakfi

Melikgazi owns a private hospital serving the healthcare needs of patients with private or public insurance, or with financial means to pay. But unlike other private hospitals they also accept patients who have neither the means nor any kind of insurance. These patients, who for whatever reason fall outside any health insurance scheme are treated for free. The hospital was built exclusively with donations and then let to a company. The tenant company pays an agreed upon amount of rent and also guarantees the treatment of a given number of patients each month. These patients also either receive their medications from the vakıf or reimbursements for their prescriptions.

The second major undertaking of Melikgazi is a shelter for patients and their attendants who come from neighbouring towns and do not have the means to pay for a stay in Kayseri. Kayseri has two very large public hospitals and a university research hospital. It thus serves as the health hub of the region and attracts patients from surrounding cities. Melikgazi's shelter provides these patients and their relatives with rooms/beds, hot water, laundry services, breakfast, dinner and shuttle services to hospitals while they complete their period treatment. It works in cooperation with the social services departments of hospitals. Patients and their attendants who declare they have no place to spend the night are transferred to the shelter via shuttle buses. There are 85 beds in the shelter, often in rooms of four. There are also futons in the corridors and in common

rooms, which are used to accommodate patients' relatives if the demand for the night is higher than the capacity.

The shelter building was actually constructed by a well-known industrialist family, and was endowed to the university to be used as a local health clinic. It was far too large for this purpose; the university had only utilised the entrance floor of this three-story building and left the rest untended. Noticing this, Melikgazi proposed using the vacant space as a shelter. They refurbished the building with donations, and continue to receive donations of sheets and mattresses. The same sponsor, a large furniture manufacturer, provides breakfast and dinner from his own soup kitchen.

The vakıf is located in the backyard of Melikgazi Hospital. It is a newly built, tiny single story building with two offices and a meeting room. The founders of the vakıf include the chair of the Industrial Region and the metropolitan mayor, alongside many notable Kayseri businessmen. There are 11 employees working at Melikgazi and only the director, who also has close ties with other vakıfs of the city, is a woman.

Kayseri Darulaceze Vakfı

Darulaceze was founded with the aim of building a care home for the elderly. With great amounts of donation, it managed to build a large compound to serve this function within a short period. After the care home was built, its administration was transferred to the municipality. The vakıf itself then became partly obsolete. At the time of my research the beneficiaries of the vakıf were mental health patients and their families, but it was functioning with very limited resources and with only three paid part-time

employees. Darulaceze uses a former public bath as a shelter for ten-to-twelve homeless men who have mental disabilities and diagnosed psychological illnesses. This shelter is not as well supported as Melikgazi's patients' shelter, so both the living conditions and the services provided to their guests are limited.

Besides running this shelter, Darulaceze assists families with mental health patients. It distributes basic food packages consisting of pasta, cooking oil, flour and tomato paste, and occasionally pays electricity and water bills for these families. In the winter some of these families are given sawdust to burn in special stoves.

In order to generate some income, the vakıf collects paper and plastic from factories and sells them to recycling facilities. They also accept donations in cash and in kind, including second-hand clothes and furniture. These donations are then sorted in the shelter and used for the patients themselves or families included in the outreach scheme.

Complementary Research Strategies and Data Analysis

This ethnographic study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA). I also obtained an ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Open University. At the beginning of the fieldwork and throughout, I obtained the informed consent of my research participants and anonymised their names whether or not they asked for anonymity.

During the fieldwork I took extensive field notes, sometimes during the day, other times at night while I was alone, but always within the same day. The notes were comprised of a diary, which included a detailed record of the day's events, people's names, descriptions of places, people and incidents, as well as my own reflections on these. I also made notes of threads to follow and questions to be asked in the future. I photocopied my notebooks frequently and saved the copies in a different location as a guarantee against loss of data. When the fieldwork was over I read the field notes thoroughly several times to detect patterns. I created an index to help me locate particular incidents, phrases and attitudes, and so re-arranged and compiled the data systematically under various heading. Some of these headings later became subsections of the dissertation.

Participant observation at the three vakıfs gave me a substantive understanding of practices and discourses, as well as an insight into the processes of ethical transformation that take place among vakıfçıs. Yet in order to have a better apprehension of the context in which these are embedded I developed some complementary strategies. These strategies included interviews with an array of vakıf-related people, selective study of the media and a general attention paid to public life in Kayseri.

I conducted 21 interviews and one focus group study. These interviews were organised into four sets. The first set consisted of prominent public figures in Kayseri. From this group I interviewed the Director of Social Services of Kayseri Municipality; the wife of the mayor of Kayseri, who is also active in arranging coordination meetings with representatives of almost all of the charitable organisations in the city; and an official in

a local municipality who is responsible for the administration of a women's cultural centre that actually acts as the locus of charitable activities and welfare provision in this district. With this small group my aim was to get a general idea about the city and the range of welfare activities that were being undertaken by state and citizens' initiatives.

The second set of my interviews was with the donors and founders of these organisations: the chairman of the Industrial Zone, who is at the same time a wealthy businessman known for his generosity and a founder of many local vakıfs; a businessman who lives in Ankara but endows schools and medical facilities in Kayseri; another businessman who supports many of the vakıfs and is one of the oldest people who is still active on a few of the vakıfs' boards of trustees; the owner of a large private hospital who is the main donor for one of the organisations I worked with; and a doctor who now lives in Istanbul but still has an established name in Kayseri for being among the founders of many vakıfs. I made enquiries to this group about their reasons for establishing these vakıfs and supporting non-state welfare initiatives, as well as on the meaning of gift giving to their fellow citizens.

The third set included the directors or workers/volunteers of four organisations other than the ones at which I worked during my fieldwork. The interviews I conducted with this group focused especially on their activities, resources, criteria for help, the span and volume of the aid they provide and also the meaning of their work. I used this data for purposes of making comparisons with the three vakıfs I focused on and to see what possibilities existed for generalisation.

My last cluster of interviewees was a selected group of workers and volunteers from the organisations at which I did most of my research: Erciyes Feneri, Darulaceze Vakfi and Melikgazi Vakfi. I conducted these interviews during the final month of my stay in Kayseri and asked them to talk about their own work, now that we were close enough and because they were aware of the extent of my knowledge about the internal dynamics of each organisation. The idea was to give them an opportunity to reflect on what they saw as the core issues regarding their work and to clear a platform allowing them to enquire about my research findings and produce a challenge. This group consisted of the director and two employees of Erciyes Feneri, an employee and the co-director of Darulaceze Vakfi, the director of Melikgazi Vakfi, and finally a freelance accountant who volunteers at all three of these organisations along with some others. I also conducted a focus group with the Erciyes Feneri volunteers. Eight women accepted my invitation and found time to participate in this study, where we discussed what it meant for them to be active in such a context, their own evaluation of the work done and the impact of gender in this work.

Seventeen of these interviews and the focus group study were audio recorded, and then transcribed by a research assistant. I have read and edited the transcriptions, anonymised the names and then catalogued the contents. The other three were recorded in written notes, then taken through the same processes of anonymisation and cataloguing.

Aside from participant observation and interviews, I also paid attention to public life in Kayseri, and some of the interviews were part of this effort. Following Navaro-Yashin (2002), with public life I refer rather ambiguously both to the state and the people, which through interaction and intermingling, act out the public life of a town. I

deliberately refrain from using the term ‘public sphere’ in order to avoid a clear-cut distinction between the domains of ‘power’ and ‘resistance’, state and civil society. Thinking along this vein, I did not approach public life categorically but instead thematically. Any event, person, news item, organisation, book or film that related to the concerns of this research was therefore identified as a potential source of data.

In order to be aware of the resources people make use of in constructing their discourse and practices of vakıf work, I attended some talks and a stage show about charitable giving, followed news items and columnists writing on the issue, borrowed commonly read books and followed the national media in general. This part of the research helped me to connect all that is happening in Kayseri to the wider transformation of state discourse in Turkey. Since Kayseri is not a closed microcosm not a bounded entity, its public life is not separable or independent from public life at the national level. Especially by paying attention to mass media, which is equally consumed nationwide, I aimed to shift the scale of the research. In the next chapter I will start by introducing a prominent theme that echoes in the local, national and international publics, both through media and scholarship, then continue by relocating Kayseri within these discussions.

CHAPTER 4 KAYSERİ AND ITS PHILANTHROPISTS

This chapter provides an introduction to Kayseri, a central Anatolian city of nearly a million people, but only a few of these represent the city in the public imaginary in Turkey. These few, who have established successful businesses in the last few decades, have promoted an image of Kayseri as the home of shrewd and smart entrepreneurs and merchants. However, these men (and a relatively small number of women) do not want to be known only for their million-dollar exports or high-tech factories; they also want to be acknowledged as philanthropists. They invest heavily in building schools, mosques, student residences and health care facilities, and they support vakıfs working in various arenas of welfare provision.

This chapter starts with an overview of the socio-economic climate within which these philanthropist entrepreneurs operate, and situates Kayseri within this overview as an important case in point. This section introduces various takes on Kayseri, both the celebratory and the derogatory. Aiming to escape these narrative conventions, I provide a descriptive account of Kayseri and its philanthropists before moving on with the field within which they operate. I suggest approaching beneficence as a separate field, one with its own values and regulatory mechanisms, in order to acquire a sharper understanding of the acts of benefaction that play an important role in public life and city-making in Kayseri. In the final section, I direct my interest to manifesting the motivations of benefactors in order to further the argument that the dominant

mechanism in the field of benefaction is gift giving, which cannot be understood simply as either an economic enterprise or as a religious practice.

A Success Story

Turkey's transformation under the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government has received growing interest from academics as well as the international media since 2002, when the party came to power a surprise success in the elections. It has been widely discussed whether the AKP, as the heir of a lineage of Islamist parties, had a political agenda of turning Turkey into an Islamic state, or of being a representative of moderate Islam, and further, whether it had the potential to successfully lead a marriage of Islam and secularism (Nasr 2005; Turam 2007; Gümüşcü and Sert 2009; Tuğal 2009). Within years, as the AKP proved to be more and more market oriented, 'pro-progress' and an ally to Western powers, the moderate Islam view gained predominance. Proponents of this view suggest the AKP experience illustrates an example of how democracy, economic growth and modernisation can be embraced by practising Muslims without any major tensions. For most, the indicator of this peaceful, if surprising, co-existence is the overall economic growth in Turkey and the changing lifestyles of its visibly Muslim citizens, which often find expression in the urban landscape. In that sense, the strengthening of capitalism in the production of commodities, landscapes and lifestyles is often taken as proof of successful modernisation, or at least as a proof of the possibility of co-existence of Islam and modernity.

Kayseri, with its industrial success, rapid capital accumulation and conservative outlook, occupies a special place in these accounts. It is one of the so-called Anatolian

Tigers, out of the way from Turkey's established business centres but a booming industrial success and an AKP stronghold, with the party's candidate winning 70% of all votes in the last municipal elections. So, in many narratives about Turkey's transformation under AKP rule, Kayseri is showcased as *the exemplar*.

An early and influential study on Kayseri as an informative case about the Turkish experience was conducted in 2005 by the Berlin-based European Stability Initiative (ESI). The ESI's (2005) report was titled *Islamist Calvinists*. Their observations regarding the booming economy of Kayseri as a major furniture and textile exporter were put in use to challenge claims that approach Central Anatolia as the heart of religious conservatism, backwardness and stagnancy. Kayseri has grown from an agricultural and trades-oriented small town to a major manufacturing site over the last couple of decades. As of 2009, Kayseri had a designated industrial zone lying on 2350 hectares on the western outskirts of the town. It is occupied by approximately 800 factories and large workshops. About 45,000 workers are employed on these premises. Outside the borders of the Industrial Zone are some other industrial compounds hosting a major textile factory, a sugar producer and a giant electronics manufacturer.

In order to account for this economic development, ESI reporters followed Weber's analysis of Protestant Ethics as what made capitalism emerge in the West, and argued that Islam, as it was lived and experienced in Kayseri, might well be understood as providing fertile soil for entrepreneurship and economic progress. Weber (1985[1930]), in his seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, approaches capitalism not only as a product of material conditions, like a change in property ownership, but as a social phenomenon with cultural and religious origins. Trying to

build a causal explanation for the historical and geographic specificity of the emergence of capitalism, Weber directs his interest to the Christian Reformation and to the radical changes Reformation caused in the psyches of European Christians. Weber argues that Protestantism, especially Calvinism, provided an answer to the question of how believers could be assured of their salvation when the authority of the church and clerics was deeply undermined. In Calvin's teachings, worldly material success and gains could well be interpreted as an indication of salvation. Therefore it was almost a religious duty, *a calling*, to work on a profession and make worldly gains. These gains could not be spent conspicuously or for leisure, so they had to be accumulated. Thus came the necessity of capital accumulation for the emergence of capitalism and its related work ethic.

Although the ESI reporters cautiously stated that it was 'hard to say whether the rise of 'Islamic Calvinism' among Kayseri's entrepreneurs is a cause of their commercial success (as per Max Weber), or whether increasing prosperity has led them to embrace interpretations of Islam that emphasise its compatibility with the modern world' (2005, 25), they argued that in Kayseri religion and economic prosperity had reinforced each other. Authors of the report went on to note that 'economic success has created a social milieu in which Islam and modernity coexist comfortably' (p. 34) in the heartland of conservatism in Turkey.

The report has been applauded for the challenge it posed to accounts that argue for an incompatibility between Islam and capitalism. The argument was found convincing, and similar accounts produced by the Western media followed. A New York Times article argued that 'the case of Kayseri presents one of the strongest arguments that Islam,

capitalism and globalisation can be compatible' (Bilefski 2006), so Turkey's EU membership might be nothing to fear. Similarly, PBS produced a documentary called 'Turkey's Tigers' and emphasised how Islam did not present an obstacle for capitalist development in the town, featuring clichéd shots of covered women on the streets and businessmen in smart suits being interviewed in their spacious offices.

In a more recent account, Fuat Keyman and Berrin Koyuncu Lorasdağı (2010) followed in ESI's footsteps, developing similar stories for other Anatolian cities in order to find out whether Kayseri could be counted an example was unique in character or representative of a trend. They argued that globalisation and Europeanisation processes had affected Turkish cities in similar ways, but cities' reactions to these processes varied significantly depending on local capacities. Keyman and Koyuncu Lorasdağı suggested that prevalent Islamic values in Kayseri, as much as they advise prudence, protection of family ties and hard work, can also be seen as inducers of economic growth, although they might also turn into impediments against urban development by supporting conservative and introverted tendencies. Yet, in general, these scholars agreed with the ESI reporters about the prevalence of practising Muslims turning into successful entrepreneurs and gaining visibility in all sectors of the society.

Both the ESI (2005) report and the studies that followed it identified Kayseri with growing industry and accumulating wealth. Kayseri is depicted as a city of businessmen whose Islamic values and practices support their business aspirations and give them a competitive advantage within a globalising market economy. One of the most important of these advantages is benefiting from Islam as a resource for the institution of a communal bond of mutual trust. Buğra (1999) situates this function within the changing

world economic trends, and suggests that it is especially useful to have such a resource when production becomes increasingly flexible. Flexible production brings about the increased need for outsourcing, subcontracting, informality and flexible working hours. The needs of these firms can be met more easily within networks of reciprocal exchange, mutual trust and shared values.

In a similar attempt to shift the gaze towards world economic processes, Hoşgör (2011) opposes situating the term Islamic capital against a notion of secular capital at all. She suggests understanding the rise of a capitalist class in religious Anatolian towns by looking at internationalisation processes rather than attempting to craft unsustainable distinctions between Anatolian capital and Istanbul-based capital, or Islamic capital and secular capital. Her argument is built on the conviction that there exists one and only one capitalism. As a result, cultural values and attributes can only make cosmetic changes on capitalisation processes in general. Although it is important to look at processes of greater scale, especially in order to avoid essentialism, Hoşgör's account falls short of accounting for the cultural meaning and significance of these processes. Adaş, on the other hand, suggests looking at the 'dialectical process wherein capitalism and Islamic culture interpenetrate and transform each other' (2006, 115). In this way it would become possible to see how capitalism is made as part of 'one's culture'. This formulation requires creative work indeed, involving going back to primary resources (like the Qur'an and hadith) and interpreting them anew in communication with the actualities of the market and economic order. Kayseri's brand of capitalism is a living example of this.

The celebratory approach of the ESI is not shared by all students of Kayseri. A different and more critical approach came from Doğan (2007), who deployed a Marxist framework of space production and focused on the interaction between the cityscape, Islamist local municipality and capitalist expansion. Doğan conceptualises the spatial and public outcome of the transformation Kayseri has been experiencing as a 'deformed public sphere'. By this he means a particular form of public sphere marked by neoliberal policies that chop off the public service provisions of the local municipality and replace them with charitable activities relying on the mobilisation of Islamist circles and the business elite. Doğan argues that this particular formation of the public finds its expression in the organisation of cityscape: an encouragement of car ownership, family-centred recreation facilities, gated residences and mass housing projects, soup kitchens, sports centres with designated prayer rooms, and so on. Doğan does not tell us why, for example a sports facility with a prayer room or a municipal soup kitchen constitutes a 'deformity' in public space creation. His analysis, which links the particular trajectory of capital accumulation in Kayseri with local governance, appears short-sighted when it comes to understanding the citizenly claims that are fulfilled by such facilities and the social imaginary which recognises these claims. Public space in Kayseri, with its visibly Islamic references, does not meet Doğan's expectations for a 'properly modern' urban environment and is therefore called 'deformed'.

In this chapter, I will neither resort to the celebratory narratives of the happy marriage of capitalism and Islam, nor approach the appearance of Islamic references in cityscapes as an aberration from an ideal. I will restrict myself to the simple and agreed upon observation that a visible accumulation of wealth is taking place among some of Turkey's practising Muslims, and this wealth finds its expression in the changing

cityscapes as well as in the consumption habits of this emerging middle class. Kayseri embodies all manifest signs of this transformation and has therefore received attention both nationwide and beyond. In the coming section I will walk you through the city with an attentive eye to the gifts which link capital accumulation and religious/ethical concerns in a way different from expanding markets and changing lifestyles.

Land of philanthropists

Kayseri strikes the first-time visitor with its large boulevards, tall buildings and plentiful squares. Situated on the northern plains of an inactive volcano, Kayseri looks as if it has all the space it needs to expand and enlarge. It is a city that adores greatness, vastness and visibility. Apartments are advertised by their spaciousness: An ordinary middle class flat is 180 square metres—twice the size of a comparable one in Istanbul. Offices are even more conspicuous, furnished with desks larger than family dinner tables and sofas you cannot rest your back on without your feet being lifted off the ground. It takes quite an effort to cross the boulevards that cut across the city in all directions, and an extra effort to cross back again if you realise you meant to check another shop on the other side. Except in the historical heart of the city and in the few shanty neighbourhoods on its outskirts, Kayseri, in its greatness, makes the lonely pedestrian feel like Gulliver in *Brobdingnag*.

In this land of greatness, it probably shouldn't surprise anyone to see huge signboards on schools. But it does. Each of these signboards, which are too large to be nameplates, has a person's name written on it. And it is not only the schools; same names, or at least same family names, can be read on hospitals, student residences, health centres, mosques, Qur'an schools, and day care centres. These are the names of people who

donated to the construction and furnishing of these buildings. After spending some time in the city, one feels a sense of acquaintance with them, for seeing the names so often in such huge letters. Kayseri's wealthy are proud of their gifts to their home town and want to make it known. They like the notion leaving something behind and they also like commemorating their late ancestors with public buildings.

This custom becomes even more prominent on the campus of the town's only public university. There, every faculty building has a sign almost as wide as the building itself displaying the name of a city notable. Only one building was built with public funds and hence has remained anonymous: the president's office. All other faculty buildings, cultural arenas, meeting halls and sports facilities have proper names. It is widely known within the city that, once the decision to build a university campus had been made, the prime minister of the day called Kayseri's rich one by one and assigned each the construction of a building. The notables' enthusiasm for building schools is not limited to higher education. Nearly every primary and secondary school in the city centre that has been built within the last 20 years has a philanthropist's name engraved on it. People from Kayseri business circles proudly told me this anecdote more than once: According to them, on his visit to Kayseri, the minister of education congratulated Kayseri's wealthy for their endowments to schools to such an extent that subsequently the ministry needed to allocate no further funds.

In addition to these very visible endowments to public projects, Kayseri is the home of quite a large variety of vakıfs involved in an array of social services and assistance provision. These associations and vakıfs distribute food packages, clothing and coal to the needy; provide free medical aid for those without health coverage; run shelters for

the mentally ill and cancer patients; help poor couples with marriage expenses; operate a public bath and a laundrette; collect and distribute medicine; offer funding and housing to students; design certificate programs for women; run soup kitchens in impoverished neighbourhoods and so on. These associations and vakıfs are much less visible than the endowed public buildings, and they certainly receive less funding from the business community. Still, there is a significantly higher number of such organisations in Kayseri than in the surrounding cities, as well as a few well-supported and established organisations that are widely known across the city.

Kayseri business people put forward a deliberate effort to construct and represent themselves as benevolent and responsible citizens by investing in civic gifts such as schools, as well as founding vakıfs and financially supporting them. This self-representation finds its utmost expression in the Kayseri Philanthropists Summit. To date, four summits have taken place, with the Turkish president in attendance as an honoured guest at the last two. The attendance of President Gül, who is also a Kayseri native, gave the summits airtime on national TV, thus entrenching the reputations of city notables as philanthropists. Kayseri municipality encourages the aspirations and self-representations of its wealthy by hosting these events and actively bringing matters up for discussion and resolution during these summits. At the closing ceremony of every summit, those who have made the greatest endowments receive plaques expressing gratitude for their contribution to the city.

The Kayseri Chamber of Commerce has published a book to commemorate those who have made endowments to the city, titled *A Story of Difference: Our Philanthropists* (Şeker 2008). This heavy volume includes names, short life stories, achievements and

endowments of the Kayseri rich. Some of those who are included in the book give advice, tell stories and share their experiences about the work and philanthropy with the readers. Others express their pride through photographs they submitted to the editor that depict them with their families or in front of the buildings they donated.

Summits, books and, most importantly, those buildings that carry the names of their respective benefactors, help create and sustain a local identity for Kayseri that celebrates beneficence. Yet this element of local identity is specifically reserved for the wealthy, the great majority of whom are male entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship and business-mindedness are other adjectives proudly claimed by the same people and known nationwide as attributes of Kayseri people, as it is formulated by Mehmet Y., a prominent industrialist:

I don't think there is another city in the world that resembles Kayseri in this sense. I mean there are philanthropic efforts everywhere. But there is no competition like we have here. I mean the competition in donating more and more. Of course for competition there should first be richness.

In that sense, local identity, formulated as such, is available for only a few to claim.

This chapter is about these few: the entrepreneurs who became established wealthy capitalists in once-unindustrialised Anatolian towns over the last couple of decades, and who invest heavily in beneficence in their home towns. In the vernacular they are called *hayırsever*, literally meaning 'those who love doing good deeds'. Most *hayırsevers* identify as Sunni Muslims. In the recent social science literature which focuses on the tension and cooperation between Islam and capitalism, these acts of beneficence are treated as by-products of a combination of capital accumulation and religious orientation; they are not considered for their own sake as acts with multivalent

meanings and effects. Because they are seen as a derivative of wealth which, in this case, is accumulated within the realm of opportunities created by neoliberal capitalism, they are also understood within market terms. Notwithstanding the purity of the religious intentions, hayırsevers are accused of helping sustain a social order that is organised around the interests of capital (Doğan 2007; Özdemir and Yücesan-Özdemir 2008; Haenni 2011). Even when religious intentions are recognised, they are approached as tools for wiping consciences clean of the sins intrinsic to operating in a market economy (Kuran 1995).

The problem at the heart of these accounts is their limited view of economy and society, which neglects any form of circulation other than market operations. In the next section I will return to the idea of gift with reference to Chapters 1 and 2, and will discuss why it provides a better framework with which to understand acts of beneficence than an instrumentalist, market-oriented view. But I will also suggest that gift may help us disentangle the problems created by a view which overvalues the religious reasoning people articulate when asked about their motivations.

The field of beneficence

I approach beneficence as a field in the Bourdieuan sense. Therefore, I see a field as a partially autonomous sphere of play, prescribing values and with its own regulatory mechanisms. ‘These principles delimit a socially structured space in which agents struggle, depending on the position they occupy in that space, either to change or to preserve its boundaries and form’ (Wacquant 1992, 17). Because each field has relative autonomy, Wacquant argues, ‘they cannot be collapsed under an overall societal logic,

be it that of capitalism, modernity, or postmodernity' (p. 16). This does not mean there is no interaction between fields of play, nor does it mean values and practices cannot be transferred from one to another. People struggle with the boundaries of these fields in order to make them more compatible with others, experience anxiety and unease in the face of incommensurabilities, and translate one set of rules to another through creative work. The core of Wacquant's reading of Bourdieu is his emphasis on the inadequacy of a greater scheme to the enterprise of gaining a deeper understanding of these fields: their rules, ethos, boundaries, depth and width; field actors' investments, tools, capital, positions and possible manoeuvres; and the hierarchy, tension, conflict, cooperation and alliances between these actors. A meta-narrative like the expansion of capitalism sprawls onto these fields and hides the particulars that are constitutive of the social, much less grand mechanisms.

The dominant regulative principle of the field of beneficence, which organises the circulation of goods and services, shapes acts of exchange, and determines the social and symbolic value of these acts, is gift giving. Characteristics of gifts which make them distinct from commodity transactions define the features of the field and delimit the possibilities of action. Premises of gift giving not only shape practices but also the desires of actors playing in this field, as they set targets for achievement and offer prizes that are different from what market relations could offer. In the realm of market relations the primary indicator of success for a player is accumulation, while in the field of beneficence it is generosity—to what degree an actor is willing to liquidate his possessions. Because in the field of beneficence, social ties are created according to one's willingness to give, prestige and social status are generated during acts of giving, and a person's social worth is determined by his competence in the etiquette of giving

and receiving. Certainly, the symbolic capital gained in one field can be converted to economic capital another, but this is not necessarily so. The dominant mode of exchange in these two fields is so distinct in their primal logic that often such conversions become too costly. As a result, actors who play in the field of beneficence in Kayseri stay in the game by donating to causes the others work for and doing favours for each other's organisations, as well as by working for and donating to the vakıfs they founded themselves.

In Chapter 1, I put forward the question of what creates obligation in gift relations. Here, as a tentative answer, I suggest looking at the regulatory mechanisms of the field of beneficence and the habitus of the actors who play within it. The obligation to give can well be found at the moments when an actor's habitus overlaps with the field. In the coming section, while discussing the manifest motivations of hayırsevers, I will provide an array of examples to illustrate this point. However, the significance of this issue makes it worth mentioning here too. Following Isin and Lefebvre (2005) I contend that gift-giving cannot be understood simply as a voluntaristic individual act. It, of course, involves a person's willingness, but it is a willingness to respond to an obligation, a desire that performs a socially determined role.

Such an approach, while in contrast to economic explanations of beneficence, problematises purely religious elucidations as well. The field of beneficence is laden with religious meanings and significations, which open up space for pious formations that take shape while endowing. Piety is both a motivator and an end result to be achieved through acts of gift giving. But connecting beneficence exclusively to adherence to religious norms or pious intentions of the heart give us a simplified and

also essentialist view of beneficence, as well as religion. Although it is important to understand the element of religiosity in this field, limiting the field of view to religion carries two risks: First, it may cause one to overlook the civic and social aspects of beneficence, as well as benefactors' awareness of these aspects and investments in them. Second, it may lead to giving religious norms an explanatory value in and of themselves, and missing the incoherency and multivalence imminent in the practice of these norms. Similar to Osella and Osella's study of Muslim entrepreneurs of Kerala, I prefer 'a framework which better allows for appreciation of contradictions and plurality of interests, glossed over or dismissed as insignificant in many accounts of contemporary pietism, where coherence of subject and action are privileged' (2009, 205). The next section will introduce the manifest motivations of the hayırsever, locate piety as a source of motivation among many and illustrate the implications of gift as the regulating principle of the field.

Why Endow?

Giving back to the city

I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that for Kayseri businessmen, beneficence is part of local identity. As in the case of the Philanthropists Summits, they also make every effort to claim this identity. The most valued form of beneficence is giving civic gifts to Kayseri itself. Building schools, endowing estates for public use and donating to vakıfs are all understood as the fulfilment of citizenly duties towards their home town. These wealthy men openly assert that they are indebted to Kayseri for the opportunities they were presented with over the course of their lives. They conceptualise this indebtedness with the Turkish word *vefa*, which means both 'indebtedness' and 'loyalty

out of love'. Beneficence is foremost seen as an expression of vefa to the city. Therefore, those who donate to international organisations or make their endowments in other cities are occasionally criticised, and their love of Kayseri is questioned. Even if an entrepreneur established his business and made his fortune in another city, he is still considered to be indebted to Kayseri for having been born there. Mehmet Y. explicitly makes this point:

There is a love of Kayseri, among those who were born here but migrated somewhere else. They say that, I was born and raised in this city so I have to pay back.

Isin and Lefebvre's (2005) discussion of Greek *euergetism* reveals a similar fervour for beneficence among local notables and the ruling elite of ancient Greek cities. Euergetism is an ancient Greek form of civic gift-giving that benefits everyone in the city, citizens and non-citizens alike. This could be in the form of undertaking provisions for some services, as well as endowing buildings and facilities for public use. There was no legal requirement for the rich to spend on euergetism, but these notables are nevertheless implicated in a certain ethos of giving that legitimised their rule over the cities. Isin and Lefebvre note that euergetism implied 'that associations (cities, collegia) expected their rich to contribute from their wealth to the public expenses and the rich spontaneously and willingly complied' (p. 9).

Kayseri businessmen talk about a similar expectation that comes directly from the city itself. But the ways they conceptualise and rationalise this expectation vary greatly. For some, donating to the city is, as I explained above, the payment of a debt. For others, it is explained as a tradition they proudly carry on. There are also more mystical ways of explaining how the city demands endowments. Such arguments follow that beneficence

is an attribute of the city, that there is something impalpable about Kayseri which urges them to give. For example, according to Ahmet G., Kayseri had been home to many saintly figures who still watch over the city. Beneficence was their heritage, their particular way of extending care over centuries. Similarly, Ahmet H. resorts to a more scientific discourse, only to disclose that the source of obligation is as obscure to him as to Ahmet G.:

You know turtles. Their babies crack their eggs and immediately start walking towards the sea. How do they know that they have to reach the sea? How do they know, even, what sea is? It is in their genes. Just like this, Kayserians have this [benefaction] in their genes.

Early pedagogies

When Ahmet H., a prominent industrialist, shared this example of turtles, he was actually talking about his own son's involvement in benefaction. His son is the director of Erciyes Feneri and a spice merchant. Among his three sons, he is the only one who is active in the field of benefaction in Kayseri (though the other two were relatively young when I did my fieldwork). In our conversation, he said he had not pushed his son in this direction, but that the son had somehow chosen to take this path and had begun financially supporting and working for vakıfs. Ahmet H.'s surprise over his son's course was actually a rhetorical one, which was used to enhance his picture of Kayseri. In the same conversation, he told me how his own father had educated him about gift giving and its etiquette, and it would, indeed be surprising to hear that he did not adopt a similar pedagogical attitude towards his own children. All the hayırsevers I have interviewed or had conversations with have mentioned how their parents affected their early experiences of giving. Take for example Ali Rıza Ö.:

After Friday sermons, my dad used to distribute money *by my hand*. I mean, he literally gave the money to me and I passed it on. When somebody came asking for help, he would always tell them that he had to check with me first. Then he would tell me, 'Son, we should give so-and-so this amount of money? I have already prepared it, but you see to the situation first and give it'. I would ask, 'Dad, why don't you give it yourself?' He would tell me plainly that he was trying to habituate me into giving.

I have heard about this particular way of educating children on matters of beneficence more than once. I have also heard another formulation of the same practice described as 'to make giving a habit of hand'. These premeditated and shared techniques aim to make beneficence part of children's, an act of habit that he or she will perform almost automatically in the years to come. A vakıfçı woman gave a more detailed account of her pedagogical efforts to raise a 'compassionate' child through this kind of habituation. She would take the child with her whenever she needed to make a visit to a poor family, make the child spare money from his allowance to give away, and even tell the child to cut some of his spending (like buying fizzy drinks) to buy 'bread for the poor'. This woman was later warned by others against the strictness of her method. But, whatever the method, Kayseri hayırsevers agree upon one thing: gift giving is learned in childhood and becomes part of a person's habitus only through this early learning. Middle-aged hayırsevers remember their parents' deliberate efforts, as well as acts of giving, which influenced them by setting an example. See, for example, how Kemal T. remembers his mother:

My mum died when she was just over 50. Although she had spent most of her life in material hardship she could not resist it when she saw somebody in poverty. We are greatly influenced by her. One day I came back home and could not find the jacket of my only suit. I asked my mother where it was. She said 'I saw somebody who was really cold and poor so I just gave the jacket to him'. I was perplexed. I asked what I would do then. She told me that she would fix something for me. She really did, I did not experience any problems.

Kemal's jacket story is not unique. Stories of fathers who take their jackets off on the streets and hand them to someone in need, or mothers giving away their children's clothing, practically form a genre in Kayseri. I do not question the authenticity of these stories. Instead, I would like to emphasise that they have a greater significance when thought of together. Kayseri philanthropists situate these instances into their pedagogical formation, and make use of them to explain the reason they were performing beneficence: they are simply habituated to do so. Such an explanation gives philanthropists a way out of the conventional, voluntaristic and individualistic framework, and helps them locate these acts within a story of formation.

Philanthropia

In its original Greek, philanthropy means 'love of humankind'. In that sense it is a universal and non-discriminatory love directed towards an anonymous mass called the humanity. As much as *philos* means love in the sense of caring and nourishing, it is not simply an abstracted love. It includes taking care of, benefiting and watching over humankind. Because it is directed at humans as a species, not as persons, it is a Godly virtue. Later it became a sought after virtue of kings (Ferguson 1959) who are supposed to love and take care of the part of humanity for which they are responsible.

Some Kayseri hayırsevers expressed humanitarian concerns as a source of responsibility when I enquired about their motivations. This responsibility was attributed to their faith, and hence it was formulated as something learned during religious cultivation. Hamdi Ç.'s discourse on philanthropy illustrates this reasoning—loving humankind as a religious dictum:

The basis of our charity should be the love of humanity. This is what we have learnt from the prophet and from Qur'an... In Western thinking, there is the premise of doing no harm. You don't have to do any good, but don't do harm. In Islam the basic tenet is being beneficial to human beings, so you have to do good. This is the sole object of Muslims.

Yet there are others who attribute philanthropia to human nature, suggesting that human beings are preconditioned to love and care for each other. Therefore, it is an intrinsic virtue all human beings share, and cannot be attributed to a religion or a particular group. As Nihat B. suggests:

Human nature is based on charity. I mean, one of our most beautiful natural qualities as humans is this feeling of charity. Whether you are a Muslim or a non-Muslim, it doesn't matter. Everybody has this inborn quality.

A similar challenge to ascribing acts of beneficence to Islam came from Ahmet H. when our conversation was intercepted by another person in the room, who provided a religious explanation to the endowments. Ahmet H. counter-argued:

Let's not explain everything with religion. For example, if I pay my due *zekat*, should I still be engaged in vakıf work? Not necessarily. But on the other side, there is a humanitarian responsibility... If you come across an old man who fell and broke his leg, you take care of him. Or if you come across a crying child, is it my duty [to help her]? There are all sorts of institutions to take care of them. But you cannot think that way, at that moment. You have a humanitarian responsibility.

In this second explanation regarding the source of philanthropia, there is a reference to a calling that these men experience and cannot completely attribute to their religious standing. It is a call that asks to be answered in the moment, not postponed or transferred, because it directly addresses the inborn qualities of man. Human beings are hardwired to answer that call. So in this understanding, love for humanity has to be universal, both at the level of subjects and at the level of its object. In contrast, philanthropia attributed to religion is universal only in terms of scope and inclusiveness.

Kayseri hayırsevers discursively shuttle between these two levels of universality whenever they mention love for humankind.

What is striking in all three of these sources of motivation—indebtedness to the city, upbringing and love for humanity—is that hayırsevers explain their acts of beneficence with reference to an obligation that is somehow engrained in them, rather than being a product of free will or desire. They are constituted as benefactors while complying with an obligation to give. Their agency is limited in this respect. In a rather contradictory way, they respond willingly and voluntarily to this obligation. As I have discussed in detail in previous chapters and also mentioned above, benefaction precedes the benefactors, and the obligation to give creates the gift giver.

Prolonged lives

So far I have listed a set of motivations Kayseri philanthropists described in our interviews that are not necessarily religious. But given that most of these people self-identify as Muslims, other formulations regarding beneficence are articulated within a religious vocabulary. The most famous of these formulations is attributed to the prophet. In a hadith, the Prophet Mohammad says: ‘If a human dies, then his good deeds stop except for three: a sadaqa jariyah, a beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him’ (Sahih Muslim 2001, hadith number 1383). *Sadaqa jariyah* is often translated as ‘continuous charity’, and is used to describe perennial and perpetual endowments. In that sense it includes any endowment that survives its benefactor, like mosques, hospitals, bridges, fountains and so on. As long as these endowments benefit someone, the person who contributed to the construction is expected to accrue merits

even after death. So sadaqa jariyah is seen as a way of extending one's lifetime, or at least as a preparation for the afterlife.

Another common religious formulation comes in the form of a dictum, again with reference to a saying of the Prophet Mohammad: 'He who sleeps contentedly while his neighbour sleeps hungry did not believe in my message'. Without exception, all of the hayirsevers I talked with cited this hadith. For them it meant more than a neighbourly responsibility; it was a test of their faith and belonging to the community of Muslims. It therefore required solutions that address the community as whole, or at least all Kayseri citizens. As Ahmet H. suggests:

He who sleeps contentedly while his neighbour is hungry is not one of us. What does one of us mean? It means according to our faith, according to our traditions and Islamic manners. It means your neighbour should not be left hungry. If I do not have the chance of checking my neighbour regularly, enter his home or ask if he has food in his cellar I should uphold this principle with soup kitchens and serve everybody.

Upholding society

One last line of reasoning behind hayirsevers' acts of beneficence is their belief in the role of beneficence in sustaining society. According to the few who mentioned this as a reason they perform beneficence, the satisfaction of the basic needs of the poor keeps them from insurgency and violence. See, for example, what Kemal T., owner of a private hospital, and Kadir Ö., a food manufacturer say, respectively:

Consider this: Somebody is suffering from hunger on the street. This is a major weakness for society. Or, for example, a student has to give up school because he cannot pay the tuition fee. This would lead him to revolt against society. Maybe this is the reason behind rebellious anarchist youth. When society does not care of these people, it leads them to insurgency and you end up with people who do harm to society.

I mean, of course, may God's bounty be on everyone, but this is the balance of the world. Some people are rich, others are poor. May God uphold this balance. When all this happened in Argentina, Turkey was in a crisis too. We were in an even worse situation. Why weren't there any lootings? It is thanks to hayırsevers. This is a very good thing.

I mentioned that this discourse is limited to a few, actually a very particular group of people. The more involved with vakıfs a hayırsever is, the more frequently references to personal responsibility are found in his discourse. As engagement decreases, as is the case with occasional donors like Kadir Ö., the manifest motivation behind endowments becomes the abstract notion of upholding society and social cohesion. They are the ones who see a threat to their class positions in extreme poverty and desperation; they therefore approach beneficence as a societal 'safety valve' of the society, which absorbs the threat of radicalisation of the poor. However for vakıfçıs and those hayırsevers with more direct contact with vakıfs, the act of extending a hand to someone in need is an aim in itself. It is not approached as an instrument for sustaining society as it is or for defending class interests, but as the act of saving a person—just that one person—and for that moment only.

Conclusion

The literature on philanthropists in Turkey is rife with demonisations and idealisations, each working in favour of one ideological stand (Özel 1994; Selvi 2001; Bikmen and Zincir 2006; Şeker 2008). These wealthy capitalists are either seen as status-seeking individuals, whose philanthropic activities should be approached within the framework of economism, or as pious Muslims who simply observe God's orders to spend their wealth on the righteous path of religion. Each explanation has its explanatory value,

given that both of these frameworks have partial validity with respect to the practices and motivations of the philanthropists themselves. They are also equally flawed in their blindness to the complexity the field and the rules that bind actors.

Given this critique, I suggested focusing on the regulatory mechanism of the field as the source of the obligation to give. With reference to the manifest motivations of benefactors and their own confusion about the issue, I have argued that the source of obligation cannot be traced back to the individual will and consciousness. It is indeed a calling that is born out of a complex interaction between the rules of the game (i.e. gift) and the habitus of individuals who have developed certain dispositions over the course of their lives. Therefore, neither intentionalist explanations with reference to religion nor the structural determinants that refer to class positions are sufficient to do justice to the topic. In the next chapter, I will continue this line of argument with the intermediaries of the beneficence field at the centre of the discussion, those vakıf workers who distribute the funds made available by hayırsevers to beneficiaries, and who perform this task with an ethos that links them to philanthropists both morally and discursively.

CHAPTER 5 HIZMET: AN ETHOS OF SERVICE

This chapter aims to illustrate how gift-giving operates in the beneficence field and how it is enacted in religiously informed vernacular terms. In order to achieve this end I borrow Ilana Silber's conceptualisation of gift-giving within a religious imaginary. In her work on donations to medieval European monasteries, Silber (1995) approaches this particular form of religious giving as a 'total phenomenon' in the Maussian sense, which means giving has political, economic, moral, spiritual, social and individual dimensions that affect and shape social relations in a plurality of ways. In order to get a hold of this total phenomenon she suggests making an analytical distinction between the theory and circuit of gifts, but without overlooking either, which is common practice in the study of religion. She convincingly argues against such contrasting approaches to religion, which are known for 'dismissing religious beliefs and values as mere ideological varnish covering up the underlying social and economic interests actually furthered (the actual gift "circuit"), or on the contrary, giving central weight to religious beliefs (or gift "theory") and taking these pretty much at face value' (p. 225). Silber develops a more composite approach and focuses on the mutual interaction between these two dimensions of gift-giving.

This chapter follows Silber's insightful conceptualisation and focuses on the mutual interaction between religious beliefs and social practices that surround beneficence in Kayseri. The Kayseri beneficence field shows an intermeshing of public and private

funds, NGO and municipal involvement and efforts by individuals who are not necessarily related to any of the parties mentioned. This intricate circuit, which is upheld by volunteers, benefactors and paid employees alike, is maintained and geared by a shared ethos that makes such intermeshing possible. This ethos is signified by a common repertoire of concepts, the most important of which is *hizmet*. This chapter will particularly focus on the unfoldings of this particular concept as it signifies and shapes acts of beneficence.

In colloquial Turkish *hizmet* (from Arabic *khidma*) loosely means service. In this broader sense it denotes municipal services (*belediye hizmetleri*), for example, or social services (*sosyal hizmetler*). Yet depending on the context it earns a religious emphasis, and the meaning covers all human services with the ultimate aim of serving God. Therefore, building a school, helping an old lady with hospital procedures, preaching Islam or working in a municipal office may all be valued as *hizmet*. Regardless of whether it is done voluntarily or as paid work, in this context, *hizmet* is identified with its intention. Besides bringing together a variety of meanings, like charity, beneficence, good deeds, paid service and duty, *hizmet* also brings a range of actors, resources, materials and acts together, serving both as an encompassing paradigm and as a shortcut to all the meanings it connotes.

This chapter elaborates on *hizmet* in its various aspects: as labour, as donations and as networking. All of these aspects are explored around the main theme that *hizmet* provides Kayseri beneficence actors with the ‘theory’ of gift-giving: its meaning and spirit. As the chapter proceeds, it will become clear that *hizmet*, as gift, resists immediate returns, calculation, anonymity and neutrality. Therefore it is also an

important resource for network formation and peer relations, both of which rely on personal ties. In the final section of the chapter I question the intentionality in hizmet and end by asking if giving is a gift in itself; in other words, if there is a gift of giving.

Labouring for Hizmet

In the charitable field of Kayseri doing hizmet is most often understood as labouring in one way or another. Any act, in any sector, whether performed by salaried workers, volunteers or entrepreneurs, can be broadly described as hizmet, since it is service for the a public good, for somebody in need or for the overall welfare of the society. For example, businessmen claim that they do hizmet by creating jobs, just as schoolteachers argue that they do hizmet by teaching morals alongside their official curricula. But most significantly and without dispute, hizmet labourers are those who work for vakıfs. These workers may be paid or volunteering. However, my observations suggest that this difference does not reflect on the self-conceptions of workers or the general treatment of their work.

Whether paid or unpaid, hizmet is hizmet, because this particular qualification does not stem from the nature of the work but rather from the intentions of its performers. In that sense both volunteers and salaried workers claim that ‘we do not expect anything in return.’ This phrase is not a simple misrepresentation of the truth for those who receive monthly salaries for their work. It is indeed indicative of how they approach their labour, how they want it to be presented: as gifts. By suggesting that they are labouring not for the sake of money, not for any immediate return, but ‘to help out other people’, ‘for the sake of God’ and ‘for it is our duty’, even those who are paid try to refrain from

having an expectation of return. This does not mean that they are actively misrepresenting the truth. Instead, this is their truth. What they are doing, and their intentions for doing so, exceed any immediate return. This is their way of framing their acts as acts of gift-giving.

However, as in any gift act, there is always the question that silently lingers in these claims of altruism and selflessness: Am I going to receive anything back? One day, from somebody? Beyaz, an exemplary figure in Kayseri beneficence field, whispered the question with the help of a proverb: ‘Who serves in the dervish lodge drinks the soup. Would any of those (pointing to Erciyes Feneri beneficiaries) offer us a bowl of soup when the day comes?’ When I asked him what he meant, he clarified: ‘You know, in the Judgement Day, are they going to testify for us?’ Beyaz's contemplation is indicative of the paradoxical nature of gift-giving. The first rule is not to expect a return, but at the same time the gift itself obligates return. The paradox is resolved by the lapse of time between giving and reciprocating and the undeterminability of the return-gift (Bourdieu 1997a).

All vakıfs in Kayseri heavily rely on volunteer labour. This is in accordance with the national situation. In his research covering approximately 500 vakıfs operating throughout Turkey, Çarkoğlu (2006) found that on average, vakıfs employ 4 volunteers for every salaried worker. In Kayseri, because the volunteer numbers change drastically over time, often with no record of the tasks, numbers and working hours performed, it is not possible to produce exact numbers. But my observations support Çarkoğlu's findings about reliance on volunteers, in fact to a greater extent.

All Kayseri vakıfs have a few employees on salary, and it is these people who do most of the routine work. Volunteers are not expected to work regular hours or perform well-defined tasks. Rather, they are used as an emergency workforce, meeting up for extraordinary events like fundraisers, mass distributions, and assisting with Ramadan meals and health check-ups. At most vakıfs the directors also work voluntarily. These volunteers, whether they do the dishes or run the organisations, have a self-conception of doing hizmet and devoting their time to a sacred cause. Most volunteers describe what salaried staff do in identical terms and do not differentiate between themselves and the employees on the basis of pay under normal conditions, but may question their hizmet at moments of crisis.

One such incident occurred during a clothes distribution event held by Erciyes Feneri. A tension was simmering between the volunteers and staff from the start, with the staff unhappy taking orders from the volunteers. The volunteers had already been advised about uneasiness among the employees, but a few senior volunteer women did not seem to heed the warnings. Just a few days after the distribution began, an argument broke out between an employee and a volunteer over a pair shoes to be given to a beneficiary. Soon, the argument became so heated that other volunteers had to interfere and walk their friend to another room. Once the door was shut the woman involved in the quarrel burst into tears. Others tried to calm her down, and the leader of the volunteers reassured her of the value of her labour, telling her not to mind the employees because they simply worked for money, while she, like all other volunteers, worked for God. Therefore she had to maintain her composure, knowing that what she was doing was superior.

However, during lunch with the staff I observed similar reasoning from the employee who had been in the argument. According to him, what they, the workers, did at Erciyes Feneri day and night was hizmet, while these women who came in once in a while and acted as if they owned the place were only there to reaffirm their self-worth. What is striking about this rather ordinary organisational problem and crisis of hierarchy is the similarity between the moral claims of both parties. Hizmet in this sense is not only something performed but also something to be competitively claimed as an indicator of moral value. But it was also the denominator as it appeared in the reconciliatory intervention of the director later that day: 'We are all here for hizmet, for doing good, for God's sake; you had better remember this when you have problems with each other.'

The line between volunteering and paid work is not only blurred because of the self-understandings of actors. There are also material reasons that reinforce this ambiguity. As I said, vakıfs in Kayseri usually employ a few full-time employees to make sure that operations are not slowed by the constant in- and outflow of volunteers. Yet it is common practice to pay wages to those in need and let others volunteer. In most cases it is the need of the employee and the financial resources of the institution that determine the nature of employment, not the position itself. Work requirements are almost never clearly defined. Most of the salaried workers regularly work overtime unpaid, or handle tasks that are not in their job descriptions. Their self-conception of doing hizmet, not simply work, is reinforced through these practices. Despite the fact that in some vakıfs these low wages and extra work border on exploitation, employees conceptualise it as their gift to the beneficiaries of their respective organisations. Most express gratitude for having such a job, like Emre of Erciyes Feneri, who worked the first nine months of his

employment without social security: 'Not everybody is as lucky work wise as I am. Here you get both money and blessings.'

Men and women often work together at Kayseri vakıfs. There are only a few gender-segregated vakıfs, yet even they require the mixing of genders at important events. However, at all mixed-gender vakıfs, most of the paid employees are men. Women, if they are given paid employment, usually do secretarial and cleaning jobs. The only exception is the female director of Melikgazi Vakfı, who is the only woman in a high-level position. Both men and women serve as volunteers, but the amount of time one is able to spare for hizmet, as well as when and where they do volunteer work varies greatly according to gender and age. For vakıfs that are not intimately connected to a religious order it is harder to attract volunteers in general, especially men. With the exception of a few retired middle-aged or elderly men, the only male volunteers in such organisations are found at the managerial level. They either work on the board of trustees, away from daily operations but still with a say on greater decisions, or they contribute through their managerial skills by working as directors. Outside of this, it is women who do most of the volunteering. But the more organisations are bureaucratised and salaried workers take on full-time jobs to handle routine work, the less space volunteer women find to contribute.

Still, there are some occasions when women's contributions become vital for the organisations. I described one such occasion in Chapter 3 with regard to the Erciyes Feneri clothing distribution project. Another occasion of intimate contact, this time with beneficiaries, is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. But there is one more important role women play in vakıfs: organising charity fairs. Charity fairs are particularly important

for the discussion I develop around hizmet because they are the occasions on which labour becomes crystallised as hizmet.

Charity fairs

Every year, all Kayseri vakıfs organise charity fairs to raise funds and make themselves known to the public. During the charity fair season, that is between early May and mid-September, there are a number of fairs on at any given time in the city. Organisations compete for access to venues, apply as early as possible for permissions so they can be among the first to open up a fair in order to attract more enthusiastic shoppers. Although charity fairs are not the main, or even the greatest source of income for vakıfs, they are afforded great importance by workers and volunteers alike.

More than one hundred people are mobilised for at least one month to organise each fair. Most volunteers are inactive throughout much of the year, and consider the fairs a chance to contribute. Charity fair preparations and their day-to-day management are usually reliant on women's involvement and labour. During the charity fair season, ordinary vakıf operations are often suspended and women, both temporally and spatially, take over the institutions. At the fairs, the nature and gender of charity work changes, different meanings of money become observable and the vocabulary of hizmet crystallises in innumerable encounters and iterations every day.

During my stay in Kayseri I visited several charity fairs organised by vakıfs and volunteered at one of them for two weeks. Although these fairs differ in scale and take place at different venues, they all have common defining characteristics. Goods on sale

are either handmade, like hand-knit vests and jumpers, embroidered tablecloths and bedcovers, and hand-sown bags and clothing; or they are donated by their producers. Donated items range from furniture to plastic flowers, from trainers to toys. Materials for the handmade items are often to women who do not have the means to financially support vakıfs but are willing contribute by the organisations. These women produce marketable items all year round, to be sold either at the charity fairs or at other fundraising activities. Both handmade goods and donations are sold below market price; charity fairs thus attract not only the wealthy of the community but also lower- and middle-class shoppers who find many bargain buys at the stalls.

In addition to the variety of consumer goods, all charity fairs also sell food. Homemade cakes, biscuits, snacks, pasta, tarts, puddings, baklava and local specialities are prepared and served daily. Most of the fairs offer special hot dishes that are very labour-intensive and hard to find at ordinary restaurants. Some of these dishes, like *manti* (an Anatolian ravioli particularly associated with Kayseri), are prepared by scores of women before the charity fairs, kept in freezers and then cooked and served on the day of purchase. Others are prepared daily by a large group of female volunteers and workers backstage while the fair is going on. With women's labour free-flowing, these dishes are also extraordinarily cheap, making them a preferred alternative to restaurant lunches for students and working people.

Most of the vakıfs in Kayseri are legal branches of some religious orders. These vakıfs have well-established and expansive labour pools, which allow them to easily mobilise a great many people when hands are needed for charity fairs. For independent vakıfs like Erciyes Feneri or Darulaceze Vakfı, however, recruiting this much-needed labour force

is a new challenge every year. This task is exclusively taken up by vakıfçı women, who make use of their social capital to organise teams in their neighbourhoods, among their circles of friends and sometimes even among the beneficiaries of their respective vakıfs. The only beneficiaries whose help is elicited, however, are the rare women who either explicitly express a wish to help with vakıf work, or those who are well-known by or have been befriended by vakıfçı women.

Volunteer women do not work only during the preparation phase of the charity fairs. They build these fairs from scratch and manage them to the end. It is the women who decide on the assignment of tasks to people, the prices of items on sale, and the supplies needed for production and maintenance. They actively produce, sell and compete with each other to generate more income for their institutions. The role of men is limited to finding the venue, transporting large items like stalls, ovens, cookers and the furniture to be sold. They then sit by the entrance and wait for orders from women to run errands. They do not enter the kitchen/backstage without permission, because women express the desire to be more comfortable and relaxed their outfits. Neither do they intervene in decision-making processes, however troubled they may become. Charity fairs are unequivocally recognised as the women's realm, even though most of these women hold no official positions at the vakıfs.

Women volunteers at charity fairs express an 'addiction' to these events. Every year they start planning for the occasion months ahead of time. As the scheduled date approaches they become more and more enthusiastic, claiming to derive pleasure from the hard work. Meryem, a middle-aged volunteer, used to repeat, 'Nothing can compare with the charity fair,' as if a mantra. When I asked what made it so special, she would

tell me to come and see for myself because 'it has such a different feel.' During and after the fair, women exhibit pride in the visible traces of their exhaustion, like swollen ankles or sleepless eyes, but follow this by emphasising they do not feel this exhaustion; that they surpass their normal physical limits. To make this point, Remziye, another seasoned volunteer, once told me, 'You should see the fair, Hilal, you should see the fair. You get tired, you're worn out, you're wasted, and still you go home and cook for the next day'. Apparently, charity fairs are an event to look forward to for women. A similar enthusiasm is visible in the pages of other ethnographic books on voluntary welfare provision. Deeb (2008) relates how Lebanese Shi'i women working for orphanages and aid centres derive pleasure and joy from what they do, which allowed them to work extraordinarily long hours without complaint. One of her research participants even suggested that 'this work is morphine' (p. 194). Harmsen (2008) hints at a parallel source of motivation in Jordanian voluntary welfare organisations, but does not take up the issue in detail.

However, the value of charity fairs is not unequivocally established among all related parties in Kayseri. Instead, it is occasionally challenged by male vakıf employees and becomes a source of tension between men and women. The director of Erciyes Feneri, who is a wealthy trader of spices and herbs, described this tension from the point of view of male directors: 'Women, you know, make everything overly complicated. They make such a big fuss, which then makes you question whether if it's really worth it. I can collect the amount of money they make with months of effort from my industrialist friends in just a couple of days.' When this comment was discussed in a women's meeting, it created an outrage. Women not only protested the derogatory characterisation of their work style, but were especially furious at the possibility they

might lose the chance to organise another charity fair on the basis of low productivity and profitability. The women of Erciyes Feneri protested that there was more to charity fairs than simply making money and raising funds; these will be discussed below.

The gift of labour

Within business principles that overvalue productivity, efficiency and profitability, women's charity work may seem incongruous and out of place. The women of Kayseri vakıfs do not make detailed cost analyses of their sales items. Their selected profit margin is so narrow that they make almost no money, especially from food. Only those items that come completely free result in a financially meaningful return. In 2009, after a month of constant production and two weeks of sales at the Erciyes Feneri charity fair, net profits barely covered the organisation's expenses for one month. For Darülaceze Vakfı the return was much lower. So as a tradesman himself, the director of Erciyes Feneri has a point. Yet what is more interesting and important to the discussion in this chapter is the women volunteers' point, which eventually convinced the director too: that there is something more to charity fairs than making money.

Why these women do not make neat calculations as expected by the director cannot be explained by inexperience or lack of knowledge. Instead, some of the women have been working in similar organisations for almost a decade and others run their own businesses. The reason they exhibit so little interest in cost-benefit analyses should be sought elsewhere: outside the realm of economic calculations and market transactions and within the realm of the gift. Everything that goes into and comes out of charity fairs is a gift. This applies to the labour of the volunteers as much as it does to the donated items. Women consider their labour to be gifts, and this understanding is the reason

behind the silent and sometimes unconscious resistance to making calculations. Volunteers find it incomprehensible to attach any monetary value to labour spent on hizmet and often donate their labour to charity fairs without accounting for it.

While women do not openly count their hours and measure their contribution, this particular kind of disinterestedness is not only a matter of work etiquette. It further implies that labour is not considered a factor in determining the monetary value of charity fair goods. Labour is not added to the prices, which would otherwise increase profit margins considerably. On the contrary, it is deducted from the price, in a manner of speaking. Therefore, instead of creating a greater return for the organisation—and thus a greater gift to the organisation and its beneficiaries—women's labour, embedded these products, most significantly becomes a gift to the buyers.

This does not mean that women do not keep track of what they do. They track whatever they produce, for example, 'Today I cooked six pots of mantı', or talk about how swollen their feet are or how severe their headache had become. Nuran, who had a life threatening health condition before she started volunteering at Erciyes Feneri, once told me about this in detail:

I used to bake delicious cakes. So I thought: 'Why do I make these cakes for my woman friends? I should better make them for the poor.' Next year I stood behind the cake counter from early in the morning till evening, every single day. I emptied the trays and cake stands. Then went home and baked cakes with a 10 kilo bucket of flour... I couldn't stand on my feet, because they were so swollen. But, because I did all of this without accounting for it, a goodness occurred in my body. I healed because of the prayers and good wishes I had received. I believe I am alive because of this.

Nuran, then, gave me an account of what type of cakes she used to bake and how sleepless she was during the fair. A vivid remembrance that comes after so many years. Just like Nuran, charity fair workers keep track of the effects of their labour, which cannot be completely quantified or measured, but this is not an equation of labour with time, and of time with money. Their labour is inseparable from the production, intentions and meaning involved in the activity. This takes us to one of the most significant features of the gift as specified by Mauss (1990): inalienability. Unlike commodities, gifts are not easily alienable from the person who gives them (or in this case who makes them). By refusing to alienate their labour from the product, the women volunteers of charity fairs mark what they produce as personal gifts, not as generic commodities.

The conception of charity fair goods as gifts rather than commodities becomes especially observable when a shopper protests that what he or she wants to buy is overpriced. Although volunteers at the stalls often offer discounts and even give away some items when they believe the shopper needs them, a customer grumbling about the value of their goods causes consternation. Most of the women refuse to discuss the value of their labour and take a defensive stance, blaming their correspondents for confusing charity and business and failing to understand the meaning of *hizmet*. They sometimes openly confront these customers, like Servet, a volunteer responsible for the sweets stall once did: 'We are working here for God's sake, we are not salaried labourers! If you cannot appreciate the *hayır* (beneficence) you perform by buying these items, then go shop on the street!'

The idea of labour as embedded gift is also crystallised with certain shoppers—those considered to be appropriate subjects of the generalised generosity involved in volunteering. The poor, the elderly and students are seen as perfect receivers of these gifts. Women who work at the fairs become especially welcoming to these groups of people, as they are seen as natural and deserving recipients of charity. They are worthy of the gift embedded in underpriced goods, and even the additional gift of additional price reduction and free items. The regular distribution of food and drastic discounts to needy customers and students is a common practice at charity fairs too.

The gift of prayer

Charity fair volunteers make a deliberate effort to signify and further enhance what they produce as gifts with rituals. These rituals most commonly find expression in overflowing and indefinitely circulating good wishes like ‘may God be pleased’ (*Allah razı olsun*). This phrase is evidently important with its reference to God as the receiver of the gift: the gift of the customer that is instantiated through his or her shopping at the fair and the gift of the labourer who works to make it happen. It is a wish for God to accept the gift. This prayer is so naturalised that it often replaces an ordinary ‘thank you’ altogether, coming out by habit of tongue. Still, it reminds everyone involved that this is not a commercial transaction. Instead, it is a gift transaction with God as the ultimate giver and receiver of gifts, and is therefore sacrosanct.

There are also some less naturalised ways to further enchant the goods sold at charity fairs. Almost all fairs in Kayseri are launched with a ceremony that involves a short recitation from the Qur’an and a prayer/appeal by an important religious figure. This

ceremony is then repeated every day in a more informal fashion by the person who unlocks the door of the venue early in the morning, and by volunteers and workers before they begin their workday. At the Erciyes Feneri charity fair, the daily ritual of collective prayer was directed by the leader of the female volunteers. This woman, who was a renowned religious preacher, used to gather all the volunteers around her and improvise a prayer in Turkish, interspersed with verses from the Qur'an in Arabic. The prayer mostly consisted of an appeal for bounty; for well-wishes, peace and harmony among the volunteers; and for the health and well-being of the customers. She would conclude with a further appeal to God asking for the acceptance of both volunteers' and shoppers' deeds and gifts.

While working in the production and sales of goods, some women have their own rituals to accompany their actions. Some pray with beads while sitting behind the stalls, others repeat a short prayer for every grapevine leaf they roll. Turning on and off the hobs and ovens, lifting the lid of a pot or beginning to chop spring greens become occasions for little prayers for the well-being of those who will eat the dishes and for acceptance of the good deeds of those who prepare them. Usually, this constant enchantment of production and the materials that come out of it takes place in a silent and naturalised way. Women do not emphasise the symbolic and spiritual labour they imbue into these items in order to increase their value. Yet there was at least one occasion on which the way in which these rituals affect the products' quality was put on the table:

Every day during the Erciyes Feneri charity fair a man came to have an early dinner in the company of a couple of women. He always ordered the women's food by coming to the food stalls while the women sat and waited at their table. One evening, the man

spoke of how glad they were for the fair, as they were finally having freshly cooked hot dishes for dinner. I asked him if they worked until late. The man grinned and replied, 'We don't have a house to go, you know, we are in the estates business'. As I tried to make sense of this seemingly meaningless sentence, one of the volunteer women interrupted, took the man's order and thanked him goodbye. After he walked away, this volunteer woman, Nuran, in a hushed voice and told me that she had been observing the man for some time, and that she had become certain he was 'selling those girls'. It appeared that I was the only one who could not 'figure it out'. In another moment, all the women near us expressed with their agreement with this assessment and said they hoped their food, which on which they had prayed, would help them redeem their paths. Seyhan added that she was praying in particular for the deliverance and salvation of these young women. Nothing was said or implied to the customers; they were politely served and left unaware of the prayers, judgements and wishes hidden in the food they were eating. But the gift was there, no matter if the receivers knew it or not. In that sense, this maybe the closest that the gift, in the context of beneficence, can get to Derrida's (1997) impossible gift.

The gift as exchange

I thus contend that shopping at charity fairs can better be understood as gift exchange than as market transaction. Goods and products put on sale carry an inalienable personal, social and moral value embedded within them which far exceeds their financial value and importance. By producing and selling these goods, charity workers are actively giving gifts, whereas by buying these items in the proper manner and by recognising the gift aspect of the goods, customers identify and accept these gifts. In the

eyes of charity fair volunteers, those who try to bargain cannot recognise the gift and refuse it. Refusal of a gift enacts the worst possible scenario in a gift exchange, as first and foremost, acceptance of the gift is obligatory (Mauss 1990). Rejection creates a shared negative feeling in those who laboured for that gift and becomes a subject of hours of chit-chat. On the other hand, those who recognise and accept the gift then pay the sum due. But what makes the interaction a gift exchange is not this payment. Signification as gift is, once again, marked with utterances of recognition.

As mentioned earlier, these moments when things change hands are always highlighted with the phrase ‘may God be pleased’ (*Allah razı olsun*). Customers recognise the gift as one primarily given to God, and say so. When charity fair workers receive payment for their sales they reciprocate with the same phrase. This time it is the seller’s turn to appreciate this monetary transaction as a gift, again with the ultimate recipient being God. Charity fair volunteers explicitly express desire for their gifts to be recognized; but their faith in the final recipient gives them a tool to overcome their disappointments when events do not unfold as they expected. A dialogue that took place between two volunteers, in my focus group study shows this point:

Remziye: So, dear Hilal, we work for two months, just as much as we work for our own households. We put that much effort, that much labour in. But whether this effort is appreciated or not, is only known by God.

Nuray: We are doing it for God, already. So who else is to appreciate it?

Here Remziye implies that, at least at certain times she does not get enough recognition and appreciation of her gifts. But expressing this disappointment is not a welcome part of their public rhetoric about what they do. So Nuray reminds her of that, by pointing to the final recipient of all gifts and thus the ultimate determiner of the value of deeds. This idea, certainly gives women solace at moments of crises. However, this being said,

what most ratifies volunteer women's sense of accomplishment in gift-giving is the willingness of charity fair shoppers to enter into this enchanted exchange of things and words. These customers are active subjects in this symbolic and moral meaning creation, with the acts recognised as gift-giving. At first sight, charity fairs are not so different from any commercial enterprise, and their customers seem no different from high street shoppers. But a closer look reveals that those exchanges are closer to gift than market transactions. As detailed in Chapter 1, market transactions are contractual and tend to have closure when payment is made and goods are delivered. Customers know what they are going to receive for what they pay. In short, the transactions have no strings attached except those explicitly spelled out in the contract. For shoppers at charity fairs the act of buying is itself an act of gift; a gift that is to be delivered to the beneficiaries of the host organisation. Therefore, the transaction does not have closure when they are handed the goods they have paid for. It is into open-ended gift flows that they are entering. In that sense, shopping at charity fairs is seen by neither the volunteers nor the shoppers as a structurally or fundamentally different kind of transaction than making donations. Although customers 'buy' something, they know that, in the last instance, their payment will be used for charitable purposes and will be accepted by beneficiaries as a gift sponsored by a shopper.

So far I have tried to illustrate how labouring for *hizmet* is an instantiation of gift-giving by focusing on different aspects of this labour, as it appears during charity fairs. Certainly, labouring for *hizmet* is not limited to charity fair work. On the contrary, *vakıf* workers and volunteers tend to identify all *vakıf*-related work with *hizmet* and therefore to give their labour as gifts to beneficiaries on innumerable occasions. Charity fairs are only one example of these occasions, but certainly a condensed one. I touch upon some

other forms of labouring for hizmet in the coming chapters, but it is time to move on to another form of doing hizmet: donating.

Donating for Hizmet

In Kayseri, although most of the vakıfs organise charity fairs and fund-raising luncheons, the greatest source of income for these charitable organisations are donations. Donations are made either in kind or in cash. Some organisations receive regular sums from their donors, especially from their board members, while others give more sporadically and spontaneously. At certain times of the year, like at Ramadan or Eid, donations increase dramatically; still, the flow of donations continues year-round. In this section my focus will be on how money is differentiated according to the intention of the donor and the source of the earning, and how it is directed at different uses.

Richard Titmuss (1997) argues that donating for the welfare and well-being of strangers is a modern phenomenon that runs counter to the mechanisms of gift as formulated by Mauss (1990). What makes them inexplicable by the Maussian approach is that the gift object, i.e. money, makes them alienable. What Titmuss says about money is, indeed, very much shared in contemporary literature, but I will go against the grain to argue and illustrate that money, at least in the context of donations, is not as alienable from its donor as expected. Money goes through various processes on its way to becoming a gift. This section is about the meanings, symbols and spells that strip money of its neutral and colourless disguise and make it a means for hizmet.

Religious money

One day at Erciyes Feneri, Beyaz was busy finding household furniture for a newly graduated female schoolteacher who had no family or support in Kayseri. After gathering some things from here and there, he made a phone call to a workshop to ask for a desk. Later, when we went to the shop to collect the desk, the shop owner, who was an acquaintance of Beyaz asked, 'Is this desk for someone in need or are you going to use it in the vakıf office? I wanted to make sure, in order to decide whether to count it in for my zekat or for my sadaka.' Beyaz told him that the young girl who was going to use the desk was really in need and added, 'It is as pure as zekat can be.'

In the charitable environment of Kayseri, for donations to have these clearly Islamic markings—zekat and sadaka—distinguishing them from each other has practical implications. A complex set of regulations based on scripture, exegeses and the deliberations of religious scholars are applied to these different but closely related types of donation and their usage.

As described in Chapter 1, paying zekat is compulsory for every Muslim whose wealth rises above a minimum level, and it is considered equal in importance to faith in God or observation of prayers. Those to whom zekat can be given are listed in the Qur'an (Tawba: 60) as such: 1- The poor, 2- The destitute, 3- Zekat collection officials (where zekat is collected by the state), 4- Prospective converts to Islam (this is the only exception to the rule that zekat must be given to Muslims), 5- Slaves (in order to help them gain/buy their freedom), 6- Debtors, 7- Those who are in God's way (like those

receiving religious education, those on their way to pilgrimage, those who fight a just Jihad), 8- Wayfarers, travellers (given that they are in need).

Zekat cannot be given to non-Muslims, to one's close kin or, according to convention in Turkey, to institutions like hospitals, schools, mosques and the like (Topbaş 2006). Only vakıfs that distribute what they are given are seen as eligible for zekat. Zekat is also bound by time; it should reach its final destination before the completion of the year in which the zekat is due. This particular point is a source of serious concern as the director of Erciyes Feneri notes:

It is not good for us to have too much donations. There is a limit to what we can righteously distribute and spend in a short period of time. It is people's zekat, so it has to reach its destination as quickly as possible. You cannot wrap yourself in money; you have to transfer it. So neither too little nor too much money is good for us.

In contrast to zekat, sadaka is a voluntary, yet strongly encouraged, act of Islamic charity that has a wider meaning and coverage. It can be given to anyone under any circumstances of temporary or permanent need. It can also be donated to welfare institutions in order to serve a broader spectrum of needs. Because of its non-obligatory nature, sadaka is often highly praised and is believed to lead to accrued merits with God. Alongside the aim of helping someone out, sadaka may well be given with a variety of intentions: to pay off some small sins, to cover the days a woman stopped fasting during Ramadan due to menstruation, to show thankfulness for some gains or good news, in order to protect loved ones from accidents, and so on. Moreover, sadaka does not even have to be something material. A caring gesture, an attempt to help somebody or even a congenial smile to a stranger count as sadaka.

The boundlessness of sadaka and the highly regulated notion of zekat often create practical complications for vakıfs. Money and goods that are marked as zekat require different treatment than ordinary donations that come in the form of sadaka. It is controversial to use zekat money for administrative expenses, so some vakıfs handle this situation by working only with volunteers and therefore avoiding any overhead costs, while others keep different accounts for zekat and for donations of all other sorts. Showing his own discomfort with the situation, the director of Erciyes Feneri told me about how he covered the operational expenses of the vakıf by setting aside the income generated at the charity fairs for this use only. Yet sometimes this money is not enough, so he attempted to find a religious justification for occasions to mix resources and has consulted a religious scholar, who told him a story about the Prophet: ‘One day somebody asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, if they could pay for their camels’ feed from the zekat they collected. The Prophet approved, saying, because these animals were working in the collection of zekat, of course they should be fed by zekat. Nowadays our animals’ feed is oil, so we may cover such expenses with zekat.’

Yet, among the vakıfçıs of Kayseri this reasoning and permission are often taken as a last resort. Paying attention to benefactors’ intentions and the characteristics of their donations is seen as a requirement of becoming a just, trustworthy and pious person, and hence a better vakıfçı. In order to maintain this, charity workers often make daily adjustments. For example, Beyaz uses various jacket pockets to store different sorts of donations, while Neriman, the director of Melikgazi Foundation, has separate envelopes in her handbag, each with a designated purpose. These daily and practical technologies allow them to observe the meaning and quality even of individual banknotes entrusted to them. In their hands, goods and banknotes carry the intentions, prayers and beliefs of

their previous owners. They remain enchanted, individualised and marked with an otherworldly stamp. This lets us question the alleged neutrality of money, an issue that will be discussed below. But before that, another dimension of earmarking money will be elaborated: the source of money.

Tainted money

Not only is money circulating in charitable gift networks marked with its purpose, but quite commonly the source of money also contributes to its character. How particular monies are earned directly affects how they can be legitimately and rightfully spent. Some types of money are seen as dirty in origin and should be spent carefully. Among the charity networks in Kayseri, what is openly considered to be dirty money is earned interests. As both charging and paying interest are forbidden in Islam, while also being impossible to avoid in contemporary banking, how one handles interest without doing harm is a matter of serious discussion among the Muslim public (see Chapter 1). Among the vakıfçıs and beneficiaries, I have come across many creative ways to treat this ‘dirty money’, all of which has had to do with cleaning, food and immediacy.

One day during Ramadan 2008, Erciyes Feneri Market was crowded with shoppers carrying vouchers from organisations. These had been sold by Erciyes Feneri to business people, who in turn gave them away as their own sadaka, to be spent at Erciyes eneri market. I was helping out in the market because it was a particularly busy time of year, and while bagging customers’ acquisitions, I spotted a man who had filled his shopping cart with 14 packs of washing powder, 8 packs of wet wipes and nothing else. After he paid with his voucher, as I helped him load his bags onto his bicycle I

expressed my curiosity about all the detergent. The young man politely smiled and told me that he was working as a porter in an upmarket high-rise. One of the landlords had given him the voucher, but he knew this landlord was not a pious man and that he was receiving interest. Since he could not be sure of the purity of the 'money' he had been given, he and his wife considered the situation and decided not to use it on food, but on something else. They did have three young kids who were experts in soiling their clothes, so the young man bought bags of washing powder. 'I do not know if this is the right thing to do', he said, 'but you know, this is somebody's sadaka, you cannot throw it away. But I wouldn't want to feed my children with forbidden money either.'

In this young man's story, two characteristics of the same money create a conflict requiring a creative solution. First of all what this man was given is gift money, which necessitates recognition and acceptance. The already existing relationship between the young man and the landlord makes rejecting the gift impossible, and as gift money, the landlord's dubious earnings make their way into the pious porter's pocket. But the second characteristic of the money, that it might have been earned in religiously forbidden (haram) ways, further taints it, keeping him from spending it on even basic necessities. He comes up with a strategy that permitted him minimum contact with the money, but that did not risk tainting the insides of the children. This conflict over cleanliness and purity is resolved in its most metaphoric way: with soap. The young man was attempting to wash away the stain on the gift money with 28 kilograms of washing powder.

Viviana Zelizer starts *The Social Meaning of Money* with the statement, 'It is a powerful ideology of our time that money is a single, interchangeable, absolutely impersonal

instrument—the very essence of our rationalising modern civilisation’ (1994, 1), and as the book progresses she illustrates how this ideology has become so widespread and convincing, and also how it is mistaken. Starting with the early theorists of modernity, Marx, Veblen, Simmel and Weber, money has been attributed certain characteristics, such as infinite divisibility, homogeneity, impersonality and liquidity, that make it an effective agent of social change, a determinant of the impersonalised, mechanised and disenchanted modern experience. In social sciences literature, money invariably appears as a neutral yet powerful source of change in social relations—both their symbol and their cause. This attribute of having the power to shape the social atmosphere finds its perfect example in Georg Simmel’s writing.

In *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1964[1908]), Simmel positions money in a close and mutually enforcing relationship with the modern psyche, namely apathetic blasé attitudes, as they share a certain ‘erasing’ effect: ‘To the extent that money, with its colourlessness and its indifferent quality, can become a common denominator of all values, it becomes the frightful leveller—it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair’ (p. 414). In short, money makes things similar to itself, imbuing its qualities into every aspect of life that it touches. Zelizer (1994), illustrates how ‘colour blind’ Simmel’s otherwise detailed and attentive analysis is by showing how money itself is far from being homogeneous, impersonal and colourless. Instead, people steadily earmark money, treat it differentially, categorise it and embed it in their social relations. Therefore, as much as money has transformative power over social relations, it is deeply affected and constantly reshaped by social ties and institutions themselves.

As I have tried to illustrate with the examples above, money that circulates in the charitable networks of Kayseri is loaded with meanings, values and qualities that far exceed its quantitative importance in the eyes of both receivers and donors. Money is tainted one way or another and it is almost always earmarked. It is categorised according to the way it is earned and the way it is spent. It is further categorised according to the processes it goes through, especially the process of purification through charitable giving. Doing hizmet through donations has the function of transforming money, from wealth to the sacred sadaka and zekat.

An elderly vakıfçı man I met in Kayseri once told me that ‘genuine Muslims’ should be grateful to the recipients of their zekat and sadaka, because it was the only way for them to clean their money from its inherent stain. Hence, zekat, sadaka and any other kind of donation are ways of purifying one’s earnings and wealth. This idea is shared by religious scholars (see for example Maududi 1984; Topbaş 2006; Şentürk 2007) as well as Islamic economists (Choudhury 1983; H. Dean and Khan 1997). However, the same feature of religiously motivated donations is also the target of cynical criticism (see for example Çınar 1997). Muslim industrialists are accused of veiling the exploitative nature of their means of making money by giving a tiny portion of it as zekat and sadaka, or of attempting to wipe their consciences clean of the burdens of this dubiously earned wealth.

Whether approached positively or with criticism, it is clear that the transforming and enchanting logic of hizmet extends beyond interpersonal relations and one’s labour to the realm of materialities, even if that material is the seemingly colourless money. Within the framework of hizmet, money is earmarked with the method of its collection

and with the intentions for its expenditure. Therefore, donating for hizmet is, at the same time, an act of meaning creation and social signification that challenges the alienability of *the most alienated and disenchanted* of material objects, transforming it into a gift with proper gift qualities.

Networking for Hizmet

On an ordinary day at work, Neriman, the director of Melikgazi Vakfı, spends a significant share of her time talking on the phone. She receives calls from the manager of the Industrial Zone, who is also the head of the board of the vakıf; from the mayor's wife; the regional director of education; the superintendent of the university hospital; and from school principals. She herself makes calls to municipal officers, other members of the board of the vakıf, some wealthy townswomen, the director of social services, other vakıfs' employees and volunteers, friends in the health sector, police officers, pharmacists, and the governor's secretary. Her mobile phone seems to be her most immediate and valuable instrument, almost the sole possibility that she might be able to engage in her chosen work, since she spends barely three-to-four hours per day in her office. She is always on the go, handling some task somewhere in the city. Without her mobile, she would not be able to maintain her connections, and without these connections she would be useless.

In Kayseri's charitable field, carrying out most ordinary tasks involves plenty of networking, outsourcing, and cooperation between various institutions and persons of power and authority. These actors have positions in the public services, in vakıfs or in the business community. They mix and match efforts and resources, which may again be

public or private, at the request of others in their networks. Whether the resources are public or private is not a matter of concern for any of the people involved. Nobody cares when Melikgazi's patient shelter is cleaned by municipal sanitation workers before the governor's visit, or when Erciyes Feneri rents a municipal building for a symbolic amount. In situations like these, what is problematised is the use of resources. Are they used appropriately for *hizmet* or for private transactions? If they are used for the public interest or for providing to someone in need, resources, either publicly or privately, they are understood to have achieved their aim. If they come from a private donor, 'may God be pleased with her'; if they are public resources, then this is what public resources are for (still, 'may God be pleased with the person who handled the allocation').

The reason behind this indifference relates to the structure of organisations, as well as to a paradigmatic imaginary signification that sustains the ethos surrounding this structure. It is the institutional features of *waqf* that affect the contemporary beneficence field in Kayseri. As I have discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the institution of *waqf* historically resists delineations between public and private. Indeed it is built around an understanding of the social universe wherein such distinctions are not so readily made. Still, if we are to use this terminology, *waqf* can better be intimated as a *personal* act with *public* aims and consequences. I want to underline the choice of concepts: personal, not private. Private is not a suitable term for many reasons, two of which are of key importance to this dissertation. First of all, *waqf* is a 'gift of law', as Isin and Lefebvre (2005) put it. It is an act that creates legal subjects bound by a set of norms and statutes. Second, *waqf* is an act of communication with a wider community, or a public if you wish. It is an expression of interest, recognition and responsibility, and an attempt to be known and accepted as a benevolent and caring person. The choice of terminology is a

reference to this very personal desire. Waqf resists anonymity, as all waqf work is known by its founder's name, whether a small roadside fountain or a huge mosque complex. A broader discussion of the political and social impact of this personalistic tendency throughout the institution's history can be found in Chapter 2. Here I want to focus on contemporary glimpses of the same characteristic and its implications.

On the most primary level, in Kayseri, vakıf networks are based on personal relations. Individuals acting within these networks may owe their social standing to their institutional positions, yet in the field of gift-giving they are primarily taken as persons with very *personal* characteristics: they maybe trustworthy, benevolent, hardworking, pious, as well as unreliable, selfish, lazy, etc. They may have power over resources through their connections, wealth, family names, or vocations. Whoever they are, they are called into these networks primarily as persons, through personal ties. As a result of these personalistic processes, bureaucratic red tape is often put aside, record-keeping is taken loosely and the speed with which a request is responded to takes primary importance. So, at the request of the superintendent of a public hospital, for example, a patient's debt to the social security system can be covered by a vakıf immediately and the patient can be operated on the same day. Or, the prime minister could assign each of his wealthy friends a construction project on a university campus and they would be obligated to undertake the project.

Janine Clark (2004) describes a similar organisation of charitable work in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen. She suggests that the horizontal ties that make up middle class networks create conditions for the existence for many 'Islamic Social Institutions'. These ISIs rely on personal relations for funding, to overcome bureaucratic obstacles, to recruit staff

and volunteers, and for many other administrative issues. According to her, what holds the ISIs together is the strength and breadth of the middle-class networks that support them, though the benefits are not unidirectional. The members of these networks benefit from the support they provide to ISIs as much as the ISIs benefit from their contributions. These benefits are not necessarily material. A strong sense of solidarity, a feeling of inclusion and harmony, and the satisfaction of being part of a group working for a good cause are all significant outcomes of the ISI involvement. However, there are undeniable yet indeterminable material benefits as well. A businessman's donations to an ISI may initiate a commercial exchange between him and others in the network, a voluntary service may turn into paid employment, and a favour for one's charitable cause may be reciprocated with a favour of support to the charity of the other.

A similar observation is made by Osella and Osella (2009) in their study of the Muslim Kerala entrepreneurs who made fortunes through their businesses in the Gulf states. These wealthy men heavily invest in charitable projects, especially in the field of education in their hometowns in Kerala. However most of these projects involve mobilisation of state resources, businessmen's donations and local elites' participation. This is possible because the Kerala rich are already implicated in a network that is formed by marriages between families, business partnerships, and gifts and favours of all sorts.

Clark's (2004) case studies in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen and Osella and Osella's (2009) observations regarding Kerala support my observations in Kayseri that networks are of prime importance to welfare provision, and that what makes these networks function smoothly and keeps them geared towards further solicitation is the reciprocal exchange

of gifts and favours. Therefore, as argued before, the gift relations that are the subject of this thesis do not exist between the donors and beneficiaries alone. Alongside the gift relations between intermediary vakıf workers (vakıfçısı) and beneficiaries, another gift circuit of vital importance in Kayseri is constituted by the gifts that flow between friends, colleagues and relatives who donate, work for or otherwise support the vakıfs.

This reliance on personal contacts encourages and justifies informality. Unless there is an absolute need to do the paperwork, formalising the flow of resources is not seen as necessary. Paperwork and formalisation are only mandatory for the immovables, like buildings or sites. On such occasions, protocols are drafted to legalise the conditions of the transfer that had been previously agreed upon again in private settings and terms. Certainly, all vakıfs are subject to annual government controls and they all keep ledgers. Yet, as what comes in also goes out quickly, there is little time to record every record on one little envelope in a vakıfçı's bag or to log the mattresses waiting to be collected in a businessman's warehouse. The 'iron cage of bureaucracy' (Weber 1985) is antithetical to the ad hoc nature and fluidity of hizmet. There are thus widely used shortcuts that go unquestioned, since the people know each other and have established long-term reciprocal relations. In Kayseri, doing vakıf work is all about establishing these relationships and increasing one's command over various forms of capital and over the overall volume of it he or she has circulating within these networks. I will discuss this Bourdieuan point further with the help of an anecdote:

One day in October 2008, Hamit Beyaz of Erciyes Feneri was busy helping to settle a refugee family from the Caucasus in their new home in Kayseri. A Circassian himself, Beyaz had known the family since the early days of their arrival to Turkey. They were

not registered beneficiaries of Erciyes Feneri, but he was willing to use his own resources to help them settle. The first task was to arrange accommodation. A friend of Beyaz took care of this, renting a flat in one of the newly built mass housing projects on the outskirts of the city, even paying first month's rent. Beyaz was supposed to furnish the flat, as the family had nothing but their clothes. After telling me the story of their troubles, he made a list of basic household items and started his first round of phone calls. After a number of calls, he was promised a gas cooker, a sofa set, carpets of various sizes, a bunk bed and its mattresses, a dinner table and chairs, a set of pots and pans, a small second-hand refrigerator and a television set. Only half an hour had passed, and the only items remaining on his list were a vacuum cleaner and a washing machine. He told me that he actually had the washing machine. He had found one a while ago for somebody who had not then shown up to collect it. So it could be of better use now. He checked his list of immediate necessities once more and told me to have a glass of tea and wait to see 'how God would send the vacuum cleaner'.

Beyaz's reach and ability to mobilise resources may be somewhat extraordinary, but the incident illustrates commonplace networking, resourcing and outsourcing activities undertaken by all those involved with vakıfs in Kayseri. Being in this field, most importantly, entails capacities to orchestrate one's own as well as other people's material, social and cultural resources. Beyaz's own network consists of fellow vakıf workers, wealthy businessman, benevolent friends, public service employees, fellow members of a religious order, and people from his ethnic community. Within this broad and diverse network, he occupies an important node in the local charity field.

Beyaz is not a wealthy man himself; indeed, he actually lives on the verge of poverty. He looks after a family of five on his decent salary from Erciyes Feneri. Coming from an impoverished migrant family he was a construction worker during his teens and twenties. Then, while he was working in a construction site in Medina, Saudi Arabia, he rediscovered his religion following some extraordinary dreams and coincidences. By the time he returned to Turkey, he was a devoted and practising Muslim who wished to be part of hizmet. Beyaz defines hizmet as being a servant of God by being a servant of 'the universe', as he puts it. With this aim, he began working in vakıfs through the help of the religious group with whom he was involved. He was soon established as a trustworthy actor in the field of beneficence in Kayseri. At the time of my research, lacking the financial resources to support his hizmet, Beyaz was working as a salaried employee of Erciyes Feneri. He held a decision-making position which allowed him a flexible work schedule, and so he used to spend a significant amount of time in the service of other vakıfs or coordinating gift-giving of all sorts, including as described above.

Despite the fact that Beyaz has very limited economic and cultural capital in the Bourdieuan sense, his extensive social capital allows him to be a prominent actor in the field of beneficence in Kayseri. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as an aggregate of a person's at least partly institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Within these relationships one can pursue interest over the capital of others. So, social capital gives a person command over other people's resources, reputations and capabilities. This conceptualisation of social capital is shared by James Coleman (1988). However, Coleman's approach lacks an understanding of the possible venues of action for people who lack the initial social capital (Lewis 2010). Bourdieu's argument

about the convertibility of capital is much more illuminating. When a person exercises command over other people's resources, a conversion of types of capital takes place. While Beyaz is relatively disadvantaged in terms of class and education, he has other resources that can be converted. He is in particularly good command of language that has a persuasive effect on his connections. This language is rich in religious references, but its efficacy is not solely dependent on this. It is powerful because it is shared. It speaks to the common sensibilities of the members of his circle, it is full of references to shared past experiences, it thrives on a mutual ethos and employs signs referring to a particular imaginary—the imaginary of waqf. If Beyaz's credibility is an accumulation of various mutual exchanges resulting in desired outcomes, his command of a shared language certainly has a multiplicative effect on this accumulation.

Although a substantial quantity of symbolic capital is required for one to be able to mobilise resources within networks, the networks themselves are a powerful initiator of beneficence activities. They are created and maintained through relations of reciprocal exchange—gift-giving—among peers of different standings. What is exchanged is not simply words and prayers like 'may God be pleased'. The material basis of hizmet and all vakıf activities can also be found in gift exchange. Within the networks of beneficence, favours may be made with disinterested intentions, but they create an obligation to reciprocate anyway. Reciprocation often involves another act of hizmet. So while the social ties between network members are strengthened, or at least maintained, resources for beneficence activities are guaranteed without any open agreement or contract. It is the mechanism of gift that sustains both the social world of waqf and its possibilities.

Conclusion

One silent afternoon in Erciyes Feneri, an elderly man in a smart suit appeared at the door. All the employees seemed to know him already, they all moved to greet him. He was Selim Korkmaz, one of the organisation's founders and an important donor; he rarely visited. Behind him was a young woman in worn-out clothes holding a tiny baby in her arms. The baby was wrapped in a blanket. After greeting everybody, Korkmaz explained that earlier that day he had gone to the hospital for a routine health check. It was there that he crossed paths with the woman with the baby. She was at the hospital to get treatment for her child, who appeared to have a serious disability in her feet. When he inquired about her situation, she expressed her devastation, saying that the doctors had treated them badly and refused to care for the child. She felt sure it was because they were poor. Korkmaz decided to take them to Melikgazi Hospital for free treatment, but on the way he stopped by at Erciyes Feneri to offer the woman some in-kind help. While he was pushing the shopping cart in the market, filling it with one each of almost every item available, we were instructed to find new clothes for the woman and the baby. With the help of another employee, I collected several blouses, cardigans and skirts from the shelves and gave them to the woman to see if she liked them. We then went to the racks together to find her a thick overcoat. I was holding the baby as she tried the coat on when Korkmaz appeared with a full cart and smiled at me. He said, 'Do you know how lucky you are that you are now holding this baby? It is luck sent to you by God. That doctor asked for money. He has no idea what real luck is!'

This idea of being lucky or blessed for helping a fellow human being is widely shared among beneficence circles in Kayseri. This thinking has a number of dimensions. First,

it certainly involves an acclamation of mutual help and beneficence. If being able to do so is considered lucky, then it is certainly a good thing—a good thing both to do and to have happen to you. Second, to do good is also a Godly gift, an occasion created for you by God. And finally, it is a gift in the sense of being gifted. It is inborn; it is destiny not of your own making. With all these dimensions it is a gift to be grateful for.

In this chapter I have explored the theory of gift-giving in Kayseri, which is often expressed through the umbrella term *hizmet*. I have examined various disguises and dimensions of the concept with equal emphasis on its religious connotations and its practical role in the circuits of gift. Throughout the chapter I have suggested that labour, donations, favours, words and prayers are gifts in a variety of ways. They are gifts to beneficiaries, gifts to customers, gifts to friends and acquaintances who asked for the favour, and finally gifts to God as the ultimate receiver of gifts. Therefore, *hizmet* provides fertile ground on which to base relationships, and it further enchants these bonds with a religious discourse. Spirally, the idioms and imaginary reproduced within these relations can also be seen as sources of obligation to take part in *hizmet*, and therefore to give gifts.

And yet, being able to participate in *hizmet* is a gift in itself. Those who give feel they have already been given something, that they have already been implicated in gift-giving. This is going against the assumption of premeditating subjects who think, decide and donate, in that order; it suggests instead that gift precedes the subjects who enact it. By arguing that *hizmet* is a gift given to them, *vakıfçıs* imply that what they are actively doing is beyond their intentions, aims and beliefs—they are merely implicated in it. This, I believe, is close to the Derridean notion of the non-intentionality of the gift

CHAPTER 6 OUR POOR: CRITERIA, ENTITLEMENT AND JUSTICE

In Kayseri, workers and volunteers of waqfs would call the beneficiaries of their organisations as “our poor” (*fakirimiz* [s.] or *fakirlerimiz* [pl.] in Turkish). Our poor are those who are being cared for, who are assisted through organisations. It is a designated term for those with entitlements to regular provisions or access to services. It distinguishes the poor who are provided for by waqfs from others who are not, as well as from those who are provided for by different waqfs. To become ‘our poor’ one has to go through processes of evaluation, investigation, and finally, selection. This chapter will take this complex and non-linear process as its subject matter and will focus on its various elements: the terms of investigation; bureaucratic paperwork; the conceptions, articulations and relationality of justice; and daily encounters.

The underlying theme of the chapter comes out of yet another name given to beneficiaries. In Kayseri, “our poor” are also commonly called *ihitiyaç sahipleri* (literally meaning “possessors of needs”), a phrase different than *muhtaç* (needy). In a paradoxical twist of language, people usually defined by what they lack come to be depicted by what they have. Poverty in that sense becomes something not determined by what is missing, but by what is out there, what is felt and lived. ‘Possessors of needs’ have something recognisable, identifiable and very legitimate, and by virtue of

“possessing” needs, they also possess rights: rights to receive, to be assisted and cared for. Therefore what “our poor” possess is the right to have their needs satisfied.

Yet not every need qualifies someone as “our poor”. Needs and situations are differentiated from one another through a number of norms and practices, and only some are deemed legitimate objects of intervention. Some needs are given priority over others, sometimes through common sense (as in the case of prioritising the need for food over the need for clothing) but also depending on the capacities of organisations to meet them. Some organisations respond to immediate physical necessities, such as medical or sanitation needs, some others to needs for education or home-making. Every waqf defines and selects their poor according to their respective criteria while, at the same time, trying to match needs with the means they possess.

Even among needs that fall into the categories defined by individual waqfs not all are recognised or met. Identifying “valid” from “invalid” needs, as well as the urgent from the deferrable—even ignorable, requires more finely tuned screening techniques than the simple determination of whether an supplicant’s needs fall within the recognised categories. “Who is the possessor of needs?” is the key question here, a question that immediately breaks up into a score of other questions: Is it a woman or a man? How old is he or she? Is he or she sick? Widowed? Married? With children? Without children? With school-aged children? Where is he or she living? Working? Retired? Able-bodied or disabled? Does he or she have family? Where is he or she from? What is he or she wearing? Golden bracelets? A worn out summer jacket in January? Slippers? Heels? Does he or she have government support? Any support? Benefits? Aid? Are there any well-off family members? Such questions follow one another as the story of the

supplicant takes on flesh and blood. The practice of digging for needs, truth and urgency is also a practice of establishing categories into which to pour aspects of a single, unique human story, making him or her identifiable, recognisable and ultimately legitimate.

This chapter is an attempt to outline those practices that create subjects who possess and utilise rights resulting from the recognition and legitimation of their needs. These can all be read as practices that aim to define the *just* basis for determining which needs should be tended to, and what entitlements should be derived from those needs. Yet these practices, being attempts to locate, not products of, a precept of justice (or justness), are not iterations of predetermined procedures. Instead they are singular, sometimes unpredictable and often indeterminate acts of judgement. They may lean on some written and agreed upon norms about what need is, what right is and what poverty is. Yet equally they may circumvent, undermine or challenge said norms. Hence, I will try to illustrate over the course of this chapter how these practices form and transform these norms within the fluidity and elusiveness of the quotidian, in the slowness and patience of the perfect continuous tense.

I argue that this fluid relationality is *the* location of justice. Because in the porous and fuzzy borders of norms, procedures and categories, personal interactions can sustain their moral weight; stories and needs are forgiven their singularity and persons are recognised in their personhood. That is why the possessive pronoun “our” poor speaks something more than the story of registering, record-keeping and administering. It tells of responsibility, responsiveness and a performance of intimacy as much as it does a story of inclusion, exclusion and discipline. But this is getting too far ahead for the

moment. Before moving towards the edges let me first take you to the core, the core of representation and discourse, where categories, labels, check boxes and computer software reign.

Governing through Categories

Waqf workers in Kayseri are not alone in their efforts to use criteria to assess the validity and genuineness of their supplicants' needs, as well as their inability to meet those needs on their own. Indeed, a great bulk of scholarly work on poverty deals with the same problem. With an ambition to create reliable, effective and realistic measures of poverty, scholars, officials and technicians of all sorts define and redefine what counts under the category of basic human needs and by what means these criteria are satisfied. On the one hand, they try to set the minimums and maximums of each domain, classify needs and requirements and establish norms that are expected to have universal application. On the other hand, they look for ways to understand regional differences and translate those differences into international comparisons. Affiliated with a range of academic disciplines—particularly to economics, these experts create indexes and charts that order countries according to their poverty levels, then subdivide these poverty figures by severity, region, gender and age. They investigate how poverty is related and/or correlated to other predefined social problems, like obesity (Pena and Bacallao 2000; Prentice 2006), malnutrition (Sen 1981; Tanumihardjo et al. 2007) and life expectancy levels (Wilkinson 1992; Marmot 2005). They also scrutinise how poverty is intertwined with race, gender, ethnicity and age (Townsend 1993; Ravallion 1994). They develop schemes to help address problems accurately, given detailed explanations regarding the measurement of poverty through innumerable criteria.

Institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, UN commissions and international aid agencies pick up on and utilise this 'data' to develop social and public policies on poverty relief.

In social sciences, this literature of measuring, assessing, classifying, scaling and ordering poverty and the poor, has itself become a matter of analysis and criticism. Although this critical vein of literature became more widely respected after Foucault's groundbreaking intervention relating knowledge production with very specific modes of power, for more than a century scholars had had the tendency to approach poverty not as an empirical truth but as a matter of social treatment. As early as 1908, Georg Simmel had written:

The poor, as a sociological category, are not those who suffer specific deficiencies and derivations, but those who receive assistance or should receive it according to social norms. Consequently in this sense, poverty cannot be defined in itself as a quantitative state, but only in terms of the social reaction resulting from a specific situation ... The individual state, in itself, no longer determines the concept, but social teleology does so; the individual is determined by the way in which the totality that surrounds him acts toward him. (1965, 138)

In this vein of thinking, Simmel suggests that the answer to the question of what poverty is could and should be derived rather from the treatment it receives, not from what it *is*. Therein, he underlines the contingent and historical nature of poverty. Taking a further step from that analysis has led social scientists to inquire as to what these definitions and treatments tell—not only about poverty itself but also about that particular society, its morals, regulations, social relations, divisions and governmental mechanisms. How poverty is defined and treated at a certain moment and within a certain society tell us about the core conflicts, overarching ideas and prevalent discourses of that time and place. Therefore, in a sense, the knowledge and discourse

that envelop poverty convey less about the so-called poor than about those who speak of poverty.

Similarly, in an attempt to explore changes in discourses of poverty during the early modern era, Mitchell Dean argues of England that '[p]overty...does not exist...as empirical truth. [It is] a product of the formation and transformation of definite discursive and governmental practices' (1991, 8). In order to track this transformation he focuses on the pauperism debates of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and states that these debates signalled a rupture in ways of defining the poor and managing the situation of poverty in England. According to Dean, this rupture can be identified as a move from 'policing the poor' towards a 'liberal mode of governance'. With this move, the previously local system of relief became highly centralised. With the bureaucratic state's assumption of responsibility for the well-being of its population, the private sphere of family that had already been affected by governmental policies became a wholly legitimate area of state intervention. The male breadwinner appeared as a category of social agency, held responsible for the material conditions of his family. The private sphere thus became a sphere of economic responsibility. Means tests and workhouse tests became the sole basis by which external relief was determined. Because this involved rationalisation, he suggested, this rupture paved the way to the modern bureaucratic welfare state in Britain.

The same period also witnessed an interesting disappearance of "the poor" from literary genres. An enormous body of scientific work replaced sensuous portrayals of poverty in novels and stories. For a period of time, description gave way to explanation. Sherman's (2001) interesting observation points to an increasing rationalisation and

bureaucratisation around the issue of poverty, as an effect of a larger transformation of power, or as Foucault (1976; 1991) would put it, a 'governmentalisation of the state'.

Foucault defines governmentality as 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security' (1991, 102) and as a product of Western history. Developing the finest techniques to govern populations has gradually become the major target of policy, and an extensive body of knowledge has been created on the characteristics, categorisations, quantities and qualities of these populations.

The constitution of these populations as the target of modern power is only one side of a dual faceted development in Western history, i.e. the emergence of biopower. This very specific form of power has been articulated in two distinct but related ways. The first operation is on the human body: the optimisation of its capabilities, the control of its excesses, the increase of its efficiency and docility. These modes of discipline were cultivated and refined in the asylums, barracks, prisons, schools, workhouses and plantations of the early modern era. The second operation is the creation and regulation of species-bodies, primarily populations. This form of power has worked through the processes of life, mortality, birth control, physical and mental health. Among these, biopower is simultaneously individualising and totalising. It targets individual conduct through its disciplinary mechanisms, while simultaneously producing the knowledge, categories and policies that make it possible to regulate a population with the peculiar ultimate aim of calibrating these two towards the well-being of the species-body.

Poverty alleviation schemes, in addressing both the well-being of the individual poor and that of the population (by managing the social vices that are often thought to be related to poverty) provide especially suitable grounds on which to observe and analyse governmental power. Yet it is important to keep in mind that neither addressing the well-being of a collectivity nor creating categories and mechanisms to regulate and manage that concern is unique to our historical epoch, or to Western history. To give an example, waqf deeds during Ottoman times are characterised by detailed rhetoric over who would be entitled to what kinds of services and what quantity of provisions would be reserved for a certain group of people. As a result, hundreds of different categories were established through Ottoman court cases to define people and position them vis-à-vis each other (Kafadar 2007). Still if we are to direct our inquiring gaze towards the content of these categories, classifications and criteria, there is something very peculiar and specific about the more or less recent governmental power: its intricate and mutual relationship with modern capitalism.

Population became a matter of great concern only when the wealth of nations started to be evaluated not by territory but by the industriousness of their people. The productive capacities of every single individual and the population as a whole then became the main object of intervention, resulting anew in the production of numerous techniques and great bodies of knowledge. Hence, addressing the well-being of a species-body is addressing the productive capacities of this species-body, which in turn certainly applies to poverty alleviation schemes and modern welfare technologies. Lydia Morris (2001) argues that from Marx's lumpenproletariat/reserve army of labour to the underclass of today's social policy debates, the poor have always been conceptualised in relation to capitalism: as a matter of productivity, in terms of the healthy reproduction of the

working class and/or as a potential source of insurgency against the structural inequalities created by capitalist relations of production. Therefore, for more than the last two centuries of Western history, how to govern poverty has been a question of how to sustain capitalism.

In Kayseri, too, the issue of poverty is most often thought of together with the problematic of productive labour. Willingness to work is valued and increasing people's capacities for finding employment is an aim that is unequivocally supported. But it will be seen as the chapter unfolds that even this idea is subject to debates when vakıf workers encounter the conditions of the people with whom they work, i.e. when the theoretical meets the actual. But before getting to these controversies, I want to discuss the criteria and techniques employed by the town's vakıfs, in order to differentiate between various needs and various supplicants.

Who will be our Poor?

An ordinary morning at Erciyes Feneri: Filiz is sitting behind the counter with her computer on; Beyaz is standing, checking some folders stacked on the counter, chatting with beneficiaries who are waiting for their turn to do shopping. The foyer is crowded with people. A young pregnant woman opens the main door hesitantly. She checks the crowd for a second then approaches the counter. She does not look sure about what to do, and reluctantly says that she wants to register for provisions. Filiz points to Beyaz, telling her, 'Our brother will take care of you.' Beyaz asks, 'How can I help you sister?' The young woman repeats that she wants to register. Beyaz then says, 'We have some criteria, we do not register just anybody. Are you married?' 'Yes', the woman says,

faintly pointing her pregnant belly, 'I am expecting in a month and we cannot even find a slice of bread to eat.' Beyaz then asks about the husband: 'What is he doing?' He appears to have been unemployed for the last four months. Beyaz then says, 'I am sorry but we cannot do anything about this. We do not help those who can work. We help widows, or the husband should be disabled.' The woman looks greatly disappointed at first, then with a glimpse of hope she says, 'But my husband is disabled, he has a disability report from the public hospital.' Looking confused, Beyaz asks about the rate of his disability. 'Seventy percent,' says the woman. 'Do you receive aid from any other institution?' asks Beyaz. The woman replies, 'No.' 'Ok then, sister, tell me your name and address; I will come to your house to see your situation. But you will need some documents; make sure to prepare them before I come,' says Beyaz, and lists them: a certificate of poverty issued by the neighbourhood authority, the husband's disability report and a detailed family registry document. While trying to register these in her mind the woman asks, 'When are you going to come?' Beyaz says he could not say, but probably within a couple of weeks. The woman thanks him, reciprocates Filiz's smile and leaves.

This encounter from October 2008 depicts an ordinary application for services with Erciyes Feneri. People come seeking assistance, Beyaz asks them certain questions to see if they fit the criteria. If they do not, he tells them about the rules and presents this as an excuse for rejecting their application from the start. If the case looks a bit more complicated or worth investigating he then asks for further documents or schedules a home visit. The criteria look simple at first sight: The 'head of the family' should either be absent (in jail, doing military service or in the hospital), dead, or disabled. If the situation fits into any of these categories, the next requirement is that the supplicant

woman should not be working with a salary or receiving any kind of pension. And the final criterion is that the supplicant, or anyone from the household, should not be receiving aid from any other vakıf in Kayseri. In short, and in the exact phrasing of a senior vakıf director, aid schemes in Kayseri (including municipal and public funds) 'accept two types of families. Either they should be widowed and/or orphaned, or the head of the household should be unable to work.' This categorisation points to the underlying prerequisites of the aid schemes: the male breadwinner and industriousness.

The male breadwinner

As well known and naturalised as it is, the male breadwinner family structure is actually a very particular type of household and labour organisation, in which the husband plays the role of sole provider for his dependents, i.e. his wife and children, by working 'outside'. The wife makes her contribution to the household by working 'inside', mostly in the form of unpaid domestic labour. Reproductive activities like cleaning, cooking and child rearing then fall into the wife's area of responsibility. Yet there is a lot more to this system than simple explanations about the division of labour, and a huge feminist literature has grown out of these implications.

First, it is important to remember the historical specificity of this organisational structure. Although patriarchal relations have shaped how labour is organised in many different settings, feminist historians have shown in detail that it is the coming together of patriarchy and capitalism that has paved the way to the birth of the ideology of the male breadwinner (Janssens 1998). In agriculture, family labour is a universal norm. Women and men may fill different roles and their activities may be differently

valorised, but there is no divide confining women to the domestic sphere and making her dependent on the husband's income-generating or subsistence activities. In fact, women's participation in such activities is essential (Boserup 2007). In pre-capitalist Europe female breadwinning activities were not the exception, and it was with the rise of individual wage labour and the separation of workplace and home that the male breadwinner became the norm (Oakley 1976). But a norm that is only feasible among the upper and middle classes. Women and men in agriculture could never thrive with such tidy divisions, much less slaves and indigenous women of the colonies.

Still, as an ideal, the male breadwinner has proved potent, and has shaped the prevailing gendered establishment of Europe's citizenship regimes. In a discussion of coverture in the U.S., Fraser and Gordon (1998) describe how white men's civil citizenship was established through their status as household heads. According to them, 'having dependents', just like property ownership, was established as a qualification for full citizenship. 'The legal subsumption of wives in coverture, and the legal classification of slaves as property, were no simple matters of exclusion. They actually helped instead to define civil citizenship, for it was by protecting, subsuming, and even owning others that white male property owners and family heads became citizens' (p. 121).

With the increasing dominance of the male breadwinner model in capitalist relations of production, and with established gendered civil citizenship categories at hand, a viable pattern for social citizenship was already in place. The ideal of the male-breadwinner family unit has cut across all varieties of social welfare regimes in Europe and North America and made its way to modern governmental establishments all around the globe. Although, in practice, the model did not hold except among middle class families, and

with the exception of only a few decades, it has survived counter practices, as well as geographical and country-by-country variations, as an ideal.

In Turkey, the ideal found its bluntest expression in the civil code. Until radical changes were enacted in 2002, Turkish Civil Code dictated, in the infamous Article 152, that the head of the household was the husband. The husband was also held responsible for providing for his wife and children. Women could not work or establish businesses without the consent of their husbands until the Constitutional Court overturned the article in 1990. After a struggle spanning over two decades, Turkey's women's movement succeeded in making the newly drafted civil code egalitarian in many respects. Now, at least according to law, the husband is no longer the head of the family. Spouses have equal responsibility and rights in running the matrimonial union. Women no longer need permission from their husbands for any kind of economic activity.

The new civil code stripped the male breadwinner model of its legal backing, yet the gendered nature of the labour market and the contribution-based social security system keeps women dependent on their husbands regardless of legal regulation. In other words, because of women's lower participation in formal paid jobs and tragically lower property ownership rates, the *de facto* heads of families are still men. Moreover, a recent report showed that even among women with jobs outside home, it is common practice for them to hand their earnings to their husbands (Bingölçe 2010). Hence, it would be wrong to assume that even a structural change in labour markets is sufficient to shift this paradigm, because the resilience of the patriarchal family model cannot be explained by material conditions only. As I have suggested above with reference to

various scholars, the strength of the model does not necessarily stem from how accurately it holds with lived reality. Instead, it should be understood as a patriarchal model that serves to keep women subordinate even though it cannot keep its promise of providing for them. So despite the fact that recent changes in the organisation of capitalism favour women for low-paid, part-time and informal jobs, and although women increasingly take part in income-generating activities in urban contexts, their status as housewives and dependents does not necessarily change.

In Kayseri vakıfs, as an underlying assumption behind the criteria for acceptance to aid schemes, the male breadwinner ideal is intact. Not only is aid conditional upon the absence or disability of the male head of the household, but whether or not a woman is working is not a source of inquiry unless she holds formal and registered employment. Home-based income-generating activities are seen as natural extensions of housework and do not count as income. Yet for men, unregistered work (which is often the only option for male beneficiaries too) is a source of persistent inquiry. It is reported both by Buğra and Keyder (2003) and by Bora (2002) that women's house-based, informal jobs are vital to the survival of households, and how pervasive it is, particularly when men's employment is intermittent and insecure. Despite such evidence, women's alleged dependency saves them from investigations of their informal work.

Although the norm looks solid and perfectly functioning at the level of vakıf administration, female volunteers and workers at these organisations continuously challenge the male-breadwinner archetype. For example, Erciyes Feneri volunteers actively encourage beneficiary women to seek employment. They even question their reasons for not working. In 2006, Erciyes Feneri women coordinated with a local

geriatrics clinic to train their beneficiaries as professional carers. Some of these trainees were then employed by nursing homes. Even though there was no such training at the time of my research, I observed vakıf women mobilising their personal networks to find cleaning, babysitting or patience care jobs for beneficiaries. The nature of these jobs takes us back to the question of women's place and the value of female labour, which is shared despite variation in attitudes regarding women's dependency.

Productive hands

Eight days after the pregnant woman's application to Erciyes Feneri, I am travelling in Beyaz's van towards the outskirts of the city. It has been a tough day. We have already made seven visits. Two of the visited supplicants were not at home so we left notes with neighbours. At another two, we found only teenaged girls at home. Beyaz asked some questions at the door but we did not enter the houses. At another flat was an old woman looking after her three grandchildren. Her story was devastating; Beyaz approved her registration to a scheme. After two more visits, we finally make our way to a newly emerging neighbourhood called Esentepe. Yet finding the address proves to be almost impossible: the street we are looking for does not exist. In the end we have to call the supplicant for clarification. The address seems to be correct. In fact it had been correct a week ago but the municipality changed the street names in the meantime.

Finally we arrive at the newly built apartment block. The pregnant woman's husband meets us on the street. One of his legs is visibly shorter than the other one and seems dysfunctional—he limps heavily. He lets us in. We take off our shoes and wait for him to guide us towards the living room. It is a new flat, barely furnished. In the living

room, there is only a two-seater sofa and an armchair. There is not a single carpet in the whole house. A flower-patterned fabric is laid on the floor of the living room, as a weak substitute for a carpet. Although it is a three-bedroom flat, only one bedroom is furnished with a bed and a closet. In the kitchen is a small table and four chairs. The flat is otherwise completely empty. On the armchair in the living room sleeps a two-year-old girl. Her visibly pregnant mother sits on the sofa. As we enter she grabs a chair from the kitchen and leaves the sofa to us. Beyaz asks the man how long he has been unemployed. He says, 'Four months.' Beyaz asks whether he receives disability benefits. He says, 'No, I cannot. My disability rate was seventy percent but then the public hospital took it down to forty percent. Now I am not eligible.' Beyaz looks thoughtful as this rate does not match the criterion of Erciyes Feneri, which is fifty percent. He then asks, 'Do you receive unemployment benefits?' 'No,' says the man again, 'you have to accumulate 600 days of contributions in the system. It appeared that I only had 559'. He continues, 'I have been looking for a job since then, but with the financial crisis, nobody is hiring anymore.' Beyaz then wonders what kind of a job he could do with his disability. Anything that does not require standing all day long,' he says. Beyaz nods appreciatively. He asks how long they have been married. The woman replies, 'Three years,' while she hands Beyaz the family registry and disability report. He briefly scans the documents. Then tells them to come to Erciyes Feneri next day to finalise their registration and to receive their first provisions. We leave. On the way back to Erciyes Feneri, Beyaz tells me that he barely avoided crying while we were there.

This is how a typical home investigation takes place. Not only at Erciyes Feneri, but among other vakıfs and public offices that offer aid schemes as well, every application

is finalised after a visit. These visits are designed to obtain first-hand evidence of poverty, but they also allow negotiation of the organisational criteria since, supplicants have more chances to tell their stories in this setting. What is negotiated during the specific occasion I portrayed above is one of the core criteria shared by all aid institutions: the male head of the household's inability to work.

If a household with a male 'head' (or with a son above school age) is to be registered to an aid scheme, there should be justifiable reasons for this. To be working is the norm for men and to not be working for any reason is seen as a deviance. If this 'abnormality' cannot be justified it becomes treated as a moral deviance. Idleness and laziness are seen as social vices that should not be encouraged and supported. This discourse is so pervasive that the vakıfçıs of Kayseri often find themselves having to desperately defend themselves against accusations of 'encouraging laziness' and 'attracting the idle masses to town'. Instead of discarding this discourse in its entirety, vakıfçıs negotiate its terms and participate in its constitution by establishing criteria and categories to distinguish 'the lazy' from 'the unable'.

Being unable to find a job does not usually count as a legitimate reason for not working. Quite to the contrary, such an explanation is often seen as an excuse for 'laziness'. I have heard the argument 'Nobody can claim he could not find a job in Kayseri. There are always some openings in the industrial zone' more than once. But in fact there aren't always jobs awaiting applicants. During my period of fieldwork, the effects of the international financial crisis were almost palpable, with factories laying off workers one after another. During this period, DISK, one of the largest federations of labour unions, announced that Kayseri Industrial Zone had reduced its capacity by 16,000 during the 2007-2008 period (Radikal 2009). Moreover, in 2008, the unemployment rate in

Kayseri was 11.1 per cent, slightly above the overall rate of 11% for Turkey. Finding employment in Kayseri was no easier than anywhere else. When the effects of the crisis became undeniable, the image of Kayseri as an industrial haven where jobs were plentiful came under discussion by the vakıfçıs themselves. Many were in favour of including the unemployed in aid schemes, but their own resources had also been negatively affected by the crisis. Every time someone attempted to begin a conversation on the issue, it would come to an abrupt conclusion as soon as the issue of means—and thus the impossibility of further inclusion—was brought to the table.

Given these limitations and mindsets, every application is still an occasion for the negotiation of norms and criteria. As in the story of the disabled man above, the findings of an investigation are weighed against each other to manoeuvre what could be deemed an unfit case towards entitlement. At this stage of human contact the particularity of needs and the singularity of the story affect the outcome as much as do established norms. A wife due to give birth in very near future, a visible disability (even though the degree of severity had not been deemed to meet government standards), the absence of many ordinary household items and the man's expression of his willingness to work, while not objectively quantifiable, are certainly as recognisable as evidence of 'genuine' need, and thus an entitlement, by the family. In that particular moment, being just appears to manifest itself as a disregard for regulations (which are taken as the basis for justice), counter-weighting them with the 'realities' of the singular. The moral weight of these realities provides leverage against the claims of discursive truth in the norms and standards. The cultural baggage represented in a pregnant woman is one source of leverage, and the missing furniture and appliances are another. But I will leave them

aside at the moment to focus on another, one which relates to the issue of industriousness: the supplicant man's willingness to work.

The hardworking and the beggar

One's desire and determination to work is highly appreciated among the vakıfçıs of Kayseri. Women volunteers appreciate and support beneficiary women's attempts to invent income-generating activities like lace-making or knitting. Directors express their desire to include the working poor to aid schemes but complain about the insufficiency of their resources. Even those in formal and regular jobs, but who receive minimum wage, are considered worthy of support. Yet they are left out of schemes, again, due to limited funds. Industriousness and productivity are thought highly of, but are not accompanied by any attempts to make the beneficiaries more productive or to increase their worth in labour markets. Except for sporadic efforts by women (like the geriatrics training mentioned before), such enterprises fall out of the area of activity of the vakıfs, and vakıfçıs settle for mobilising these nuances in drawing distinctions between supplicants. In that sense, attempts towards governing the productive capacities of the poor are minimal.

Although having a job or even being able to work disqualifies one for aid schemes, there are many registered beneficiaries of Erciyes Feneri and Darulaceze who are like the husband of the pregnant woman. This situation is often justified with a desire to reward *the hardworking* for their efforts. The hardworking, here, is positioned against the beggar and the indolent. In this comparison the hardworking is mostly described in terms of being responsible and independent, and of accumulating just (*helal*) earnings.

Beggars may be responsible, but are perceived as lacking in just earnings and honour. And the indolent seem to lack all of the above characteristics, and indeed they generate a sense of outrage among the vakıfçıs. I recall, for example, an occasion when Beyaz returned from a home visit annoyed and furious. He had gone to investigate the home of a construction worker who had been unemployed for a fairly long time. Yet, when Beyaz arrived there at 11 a.m. on a weekday, he found the supplicant man just getting up. Beyaz lectured the guy about the vices of laziness and questioned his sense of responsibility, as well as the genuineness of his need, asking, ‘How can an unemployed man sleep until noon instead of going out and looking for work? If you are not willing to take care of yourself, do not expect us to do so.’

Idleness is a common theme in discussions of poverty and welfare provisions. From the workhouses of seventeenth-century Britain (Polanyi 1957; M. Dean 1991) to the unemployment benefit regulations of modern welfare states (Fox-Piven and Cloward 1972; Katz 1989), examples of tests for idleness and precautions against it are plentiful in European history. Lydia Morris (2001) describes in detail how poverty has been moralised in England since the sixteenth century, when landless masses began flowing into cities. The regulations that followed the famous Poor Law of 1601 sought ways of administering the mostly vagrant poor. Practices like assigning each to a parish and confining the able-bodied poor to workhouses were all aimed at fighting the ‘idleness and vagrancy’ of the victims of the Great Enclosure and the effects of early capitalism. Coming to the nineteenth century’s New Poor Law, pauperism was commonly seen ‘by implication as a wilful choice of the idle, who were to be denied community membership not just by physical removal to the workhouses, but also by moral condemnation’ (ibid. 36). As Morris illustrates, the equation of poverty with idleness

and moral degradation has travelled through discourses of eugenics, the lumpenproletariat and Social Darwinism, well into twentieth-century discussions on the culture of poverty and welfare dependency.

Within this framework beggars have been doubly condemned and often criminalised as sources of social vice, manifesting idleness, intentionally declining work and parasitically living off other people's earnings (Morris 2001). But, notwithstanding the observable similarities in today's Kayseri, it would be wrong to attribute universality to this discourse. Discussing how begging has been perceived in Muslim societies, Amy Singer (2008) notes that until the end of the nineteenth century beggars were widely tolerated and sustained in the Islamic World. Even when begging was criticised, it was not done so on the basis of social morality, but formulated within terms of faith in God. An outspoken critic of begging, Al-Ghazali of the twelfth century argued that, although it may be permissible in certain situations, begging is not laudable for two reasons: 'First, begging suggested that one's belief in God is flawed, either through lack of confidence that God would provide or by the intimation that a person might somehow share in God's attributes, either as a provider or as a source of shame for the one who begs. Second, begging risked testing another believer in an inappropriate manner by demanding charity and so perhaps compelling a person to give to or refuse someone for the wrong reasons...' (ibid. 169). This attitude towards begging as a test of one's faith or as a risk to another's moral standing is paradigmatically different from an approach to poverty as a social ill or moral vice. Here, problems associated with begging are those of the relationship between a person and God, and with the person from whom charity is demanded. There is not a society or a population involved whose well-being

could be threatened by such an act, neither there is a concern about idleness. In this view, working to earn money may be encouraged, yet not working is not stigmatised.

Nadir Özbek (2002) reports that until 1750, there had not been a single attempt to eradicate begging or to make use of the productive capacities of the poor in the Ottoman Empire. Later, sporadic and unsystematic attempts to regulate begging began to be observed in large urban areas. Yet well into the twentieth century, beggars had their own guilds and their own legal status in the cities. Officially, begging was treated like any other vocation (ibid. 74). Around 1890, public discourse around beggars changed markedly. Beggars began to be characterised in newspapers as an urban disturbance. Singer (2008) approaches this change in discourse, which could only be attributed to the influence of a stratum of the bureaucratic elite, as a manifestation of desires for modernisation. Pamuk (2006) makes a similar observation and contends that the Ottoman elite adopted a Western gaze, looking at its urban spaces with contempt and curiosity, and attempted to erase whatever this gaze was attracted to. Özbek (2002) notes the irony of the situation, observing that even the descriptions of beggars on the streets of Istanbul were direct translations from French newspapers (p. 82, note 37).

In the end, laws criminalising begging and vagrancy, the first of which was issued in 1909, were generally ineffective. There were a few deportations from Istanbul, and even fewer prosecutions, but no attempt to nudge beggars towards work, even though this was the manifest aim of the law. In the republican era begging has been seen as a petty offence and punished with a minimal monetary fine (Article 33, Resmi Gazete 2005). Despite these laws, there have been only irregular and sporadic efforts to arrest and penalise beggars. In the public discourse, however, begging is increasingly perceived as

a form of organised crime, with beggars being forced to work on the streets by gang leaders (see for example ATO 2004). Hence, they become seen either as victims or profiteers of a criminal organisation, which in turn has little to do with genuine need.

In the vakıfs of Kayseri begging and its local variation, ‘gathering’ are almost unanimously despised. Part of this ire is created by shared opinions about idleness and parasitism, yet there are other issues that affect attitudes towards beggars as well. In order to provide a more complete picture I should clarify the meaning of ‘gathering’ (*toplayıcılık*). In the vernacular language of Kayseri vakıfçısı a gatherer is a person who collects aid from various vakıfs and public institutions, and allegedly sells some of these aid items for cash. Among vakıfçısı, not only are gatherers’ intentions and moral stances continuously questioned, the genuineness of their need is also under suspicion. They are seen as professionals create waste among already limited resources. With their ‘fake’ needs and cons they are vakıfçısı’ and social workers’ anathema par excellence. Beggars are usually lumped together with gatherers as professional liars, storytellers, and performers of poverty and misery.

In addition to suspicions about the morality of supplicants, this manifest disdain towards beggars and gatherers has two facts. The first of these is related to issues of funding, while the second presents concerns about justice. There is strong agreement between the directors, workers and benefactors of vakıfs in Kayseri on the purported negative affects of gatherers on the field of beneficence. Benefactors want to be confident about the fate of their donations—that they are spent for right reasons to meet the just and genuine needs of the poor in Kayseri. Personal networks of trust are the sole sources of this guarantee. All vakıfs rely on these networks of trust to collect regular donations, and

thus to sustain their activities. Because trust is built around personal recognition, it is equally common for it to be lost with a counter-story. Stories of gatherers and beggars who abuse vakıfs are argued to have a geometrically increasing effect on the trustworthiness of these organisations. In order to fight this problem, eight of the most prominent vakıfs in Kayseri cooperated with the Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality (*Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi*, KBB) to create a shared database. Known as Information System of Households in Need of Help (*Yardıma Muhtaç Hane Bilgi Sistemi*, HBS), this database was built by the Social Services Directorate of the Metropolitan Municipality. The idea behind HBS was to scan for poverty in the city and to register everybody whose income fell under a certain level. According to the municipal officer who initiated the project, there were four motives behind this tremendous task: First, to create a social risk map by registering those who are disabled, widowed, etc. Second, to avoid wasting resources by preventing duplicate aid. Third, to maintain the trust of benefactors. And fourth, to guarantee that no one who needed help was missed by the aid schemes.

The municipality initiated the HBS project in 2005. In 2006, 15,000 households, totalling approximately 60,000 citizens, were surveyed. The objective was to have surveyed the whole population of 911,984 people by the end of 2009 (TÜİK 2009). Despite these ambitious goals, as of 2011, not a single survey has been added to the original 15,000. It is not possible to foresee the future of the project, but the current picture attests at the very least that the declared aims of creating a map of social risk and an all-inclusive database of ‘ihtiyaç sahipleri’ (possessors of need) have been postponed, if not quietly abandoned. We are then left with the other two aims: preventing duplicate aid and creating trust.

In order to achieve this goal, the municipality donated computers to participating vakıfs and organised training sessions to teach vakıf employees how to use the database. During my fieldwork, six of the participating eight vakıfs were regularly entering data into the system. They also entered their registered beneficiaries, further developing the database. With these entries, duplicate aid could be detected immediately after the introduction of the system, and these beneficiaries were given the chance to choose one vakıf and give up the rest. Now a crucial part of the assessment and registration processes is cross-checking supplicants' declarations that they were not receiving any aid with the information in the system. Because previous entries are also accessible, it is possible for vakıf workers to question the supplicants regarding reasons their entitlements were withdrawn by another vakıf.

Left in the hands of the vakıfçıs this highly developed and centralised surveillance tool now serves some practical needs of the organisations. Disregarding the municipality's requests that all fields of the questionnaire be completed, vakıfs entered only the names and addresses of supplicants, and the type of the aid scheme to which they were registered. They did not collect any data regarding family members, their ages, education levels, income-generating activities, health condition, household need, home towns or migration histories, as requested by the municipality. Neither did they create records for rejected applications. Within the current use of the system, it is possible to argue that the initial design of the project, which had aimed to document then govern the welfare of poor citizens, gave way to a more pragmatic use with one aim: detecting scams and fraud. With this tool, vakıf directors' hands were strengthened in their attempts to persuade potential benefactors.

The second facet of the expressed disdain towards beggars and gatherers is related to ideas and concerns about justice. Some vakıfçıs occupy positions that involve assessing needs, outlining the rights that might derive from these needs and helping beneficiaries turn entitlements into means to meet their needs. How to prioritise between various needs and to whom to extend a hand are decisions that must be made, and vakıfçıs unavoidably make judgements in the course of these decisions. While coming to decisions they make claims to justice and justness. This particular sense of justice is essentially relational. This relationality exists first with reference to the dialogical character of the decision-making process, which involves at least two parties: the supplicant and the vakıfçı. Here, beggars are despised for the reasons articulated by al Ghazali, especially the notion of compelling a person to give charity for wrong reasons. They are blamed for inappropriately and unnecessarily testing a fellow believer's faith and obedience to God's orders, i.e. being generous in giving.

Justice is also relational in that it is always referential towards third parties not directly involved in the process of judgement. These third parties are other beneficiaries, other supplicants, and even unknown others who have needs but have not made demands based on those needs. They are the 'others' alluded to in excuses like, 'If we register you it would be an injustice to others we have rejected on the same grounds.' They are the consolidated 'people' alluded to in such phrases as, 'Still be grateful, there are people who are worse off than you,' and named when it is argued that, 'We accepted so-and-so, now we have to be just!' Hence, all judgements and decisions refer to this sometimes intimately known, sometimes anonymous mass of others who possess needs. Need is recognised and treated with distributive and comparative aspects of justice in

mind. Within this context, helping professional beggars and gatherers whose needs are not justifiable is a breach of justice, a violation of somebody else's rights.

There is one more aspect to this overly present relationality. Kayseri vakıfçısı can be seen as often doing care work with resources that are not their own. They see themselves as intermediaries between benefactors and beneficiaries—between the owners of means and the possessors of needs, respectively. As another vakıfçı, Sena, once commented, they 'hunt someone else's bird with someone else's stones'. Occupying this intermediary position, vakıfçısı find themselves in situations wherein they are charged with deciding where and on whom to spend donations. Yet administering someone else's money has implications beyond those that relate to maintaining trust in order to keep receiving funds. As I discussed in detail in the previous chapter, donations carry a history of their own, traces of previous owners. The intentions of benefactors and whether the money is zekat or sadaka restrict the areas in which the money could be spent. As I described before, zekat in particular can only be given to certain groups of people to meet certain needs. Vakıfçısı carry this burden of managing the beneficence of others while remaining loyal and just to their cause and their intentions. Judgement, an attempt to be just, therefore involves relationality in one more sense, that of having an indissoluble connection to benefactors via the medium of their donations. Spending these (almost) borrowed resources on beggars and gatherers, whose needs and conditions are questionable, is considered an injustice to the benefactors as well.

But, in accordance with the principle of relationality in its first sense—as an interaction between vakıfçısı and supplicants, there are always variations in the ways vakıfçısı deal

with beggars. For example, the director of Meligazi follows a principle of never turning anyone away empty-handed. So even if she knows perfectly well that the person in front of her is a professional beggar and that her story is not true, she does not risk refusing any genuine need. She describes her solution to the problems of justice and righteousness as one of practicality: she does not spend vakıf resources or any zekat or sadaka portion of what was given to her for distribution; she uses only her own resources on supplicants she cannot trust. In this way she re-calibrates the relationship as one between herself and the supplicant only.

Another variation of this is performed by the Erciyes Feneri employees working in the vakıf's Turkish bath. These two female employees told me that they actively hid information about a beneficiary they knew to be a beggar. The employees knew this woman personally, and because the beneficiary woman begged only when she ran out of basic necessities, they did not perceive her behaviour as indolence or parasitism. In their eyes, this was a subsistence activity. In the last instance, not all begging was the same, nor everyone's stories.

Possessions

Recall the home visit I mentioned earlier, and recall what the supplicants' home looked like. After we came back to Erciyes Feneri that afternoon, Beyaz continued to dwell on the emptiness of the house. His impression had heavily influenced his decision, and what he was most touched by was that emptiness, those missing items we were so used to seeing in every other flat: carpets, sofa sets, dining tables, cupboards, dressers, chests, televisions, radios, computers, kitchen appliances, etc. Otherwise, the house looked new, clean and in good condition.

During these investigations, poverty must be materialised in front of the vakıfçıs to convince them of the genuineness and urgency of need. This expectation signals an underlying assumption about poverty, that it is an observable material condition, in such a way that one can recognise penury almost at first sight. Most important is this visual recognition: what the investigator sees, and then codes as signs of wealth or poverty, is taken as proof. Yet there are also moments when poverty manifests itself through other senses; the smell of damp, a shiver from the coldness of a room or the coughing of a sick child is jotted down in a mental note.

Partly due to the fact that decision-makers in Kayseri vakıfs are often those who make the home visits, no written or recorded material is produced out of these investigations. Typically, no photographs are taken nor forms completed, though this is not a uniform practice and is a matter of debate on ethics among vakıf workers. For example, within the municipal bureaucracy, investigators are often low-level employees, while only their directors have the authority to make decisions regarding the distribution of provisions like daily bread or hot dishes from municipal soup kitchens. In this case investigators are asked to provide visual evidence when a case becomes controversial. In one such situation, Sena, the secretary to the Director of Social Services, went to visit a persistently demanding supplicant's home with a camcorder. After a very tense visit she returned with footage, which then travelled around in the municipality. I watched it on Sena's computer. The whole of the footage was of the household items in the supplicant's home. The voices of both Sena and the supplicant woman were heard in discussion off-screen, but even without seeing their faces it was apparent that the woman's strenuous efforts to tell her story did not catch Sena's attention. Rather, her

gaze was directed towards the woman's possessions: extra carpets stacked behind the door and rooms crammed with furniture.

There were many other reasons (like her grown-up children and their earnings) for the rejection of this woman's demands, but this intrusive footage and in particular the abundance of carpets provided the municipality the most solid grounds for their negative decision. What the suppliant possessed was taken as proof of wealth, and wealth is always taken as a disqualifier. Indeed, detecting signs of wealth is the main component of investigations. In Kayseri vakıfs this is done in a very informal and personal way. Larger international aid organisations like Deniz Feneri use official investigation forms on which all possible household items are listed, from washing machines to mobile phones, and these forms are then presented to decision-making bodies to paint a picture of the family's degree of poverty. These investigation processes are very much quantified and objectified, and in that sense different from those at Kayseri vakıfs; nonetheless, all these share the assumption that poverty is detectable through what a household possesses and lacks.

Home investigation, or a home visit as some vakıfçıs say to sugarcoat it, is structurally an intrusive surveillance technique. It exposes the inside of a person's home, her belongings, living arrangements, possessions or lack thereof, and even the contents of her refrigerator to a stranger's eyes. Some vakıfçıs are sensitive to the violation this investigative strategy involves and develop techniques to turn the occasion into something else, as will be seen in Chapter 7. This awareness has motivated some vakıfs to develop policies that avoid documenting poverty, especially with photographs and video recordings, because the insult such a practice adds to the injury of the poor. Yet

there are cases like Sena's in which no one seems to care. Although how the situation is handled makes big difference, home investigations in general emphasise the imbalance of power and create shame in the beneficiaries that is manifested alongside an anxiety over what their possessions might tell the investigator.

With this anxiety, supplicants sometimes feel the need to warn against the impression investigators may take from the appearance of their homes. Some tell how wealthy once they were, others disclose which items were the gifts of benevolent neighbours and relatives. Supplicants try to shift the focus of investigation from possessions to income; as one woman said, 'We have all the fancy furniture but at the end of the day you cannot eat your sofa.' These arguments are often found to be plausible, but how to get the truth under the glossy layer of commodities is a matter of discussion, within which uniform resolution is impossible to achieve. Possessions, then, become another item of negotiation during home visits. In attempts to be just in decision-making, then, even car ownership might at times be ignored, while at other times a new mobile phone may create suspicion.

Frank Prochaska's (2008) account of visiting practices in Victorian England tells a very similar story. In Victorian England household visiting was the paramount activity of charitable work and created a mobilisation of volunteers to degrees almost unseen before. But unlike the practice in Kayseri, these visits were not simply directed to documentation and vetting purposes. 'The simple doctrine that informed district visiting for much of its history was that impoverished and benighted souls could be saved by the agency of another human being, who cared enough about them to be interested in their survival and spiritual well-being' (p.61-62). Yet, just like in Kayseri the visits were

sources of both hope and anxiety for the members of the poor households, because of the surveillance, canvassing and even invasion involved.

Responsibilisation and Moralisation

The disabled supplicant with the almost empty house comes to Erciyes Feneri next morning, as he was instructed. He is driven to the market by his brother and mother. They enter the building together and look around for Beyaz. After welcoming them, I go to find him. He is in the kitchen fetching his tea, but comes back hastily, greets them and takes the man's documents in order to finalise the registration. The man and his family are now entitled to 80TL (£35) worth of goods every month from Erciyes Feneri Market. Because the earliest scheduled shopping day for his neighbourhood is quite a while later, Beyaz tells him to take his first shopping trip then and there, as an extra. When the man enters the market to fill his shopping cart, Beyaz calls on Emre (another Erciyes Feneri employee) to fetch four carpets from the depot and instructs me to find clothes for the expected baby. Emre brings the carpets, I leave the baby overalls and vests, along with some other items for the mother, next to the cashier. When I go out to the foyer, I hear Beyaz and the man's brother talking. It appears that the brother is a municipal constable, in a moderately paying, stable position. Beyaz reproaches him saying, 'What kind of a brother are you? If you had bought one carpet each year with your constable's salary, that little kid would not have had to grow up on bare floors'.

As we have seen with the idea of the male breadwinner and through discussions around idleness, the issue of responsibility always accompanies poverty discourses. It is not

necessarily one of individualised liberal responsibility as Dean (1991) argues regarding Britain. Neither it always takes the shape Morris (2001) describes or blaming the poor for their poverty (although it is occasionally the case). But certainly the vakıfçıs of Kayseri try to assign responsibility to others, not necessarily in the sense of holding these others responsible for the current situation, but in the sense of requesting that one take responsibility for alleviating the effects of poverty. As seen in this anecdote, it is almost always family members who are invited to take on this responsibility. Siblings, fathers, children and even more distant relatives are expected to take care of their fallen kinsmen (especially kinswomen). It is seen as a natural responsibility, causing great dishonour if not taken. So, family members are enquired about during the application and assessment process, both to learn whether or not they are dependent on the supplicant and because they are viewed as possible assets—just like a house or a pension.

A detailed family registry (one of the documents required from every prospective beneficiary) is often used as a reference point for this inquiry. The document lists marital status and kin from both older and younger generations, i.e. spouse, father, mother and children, as well as siblings if the supplicant is not married. In addition to names, the registry details the ages and civil statuses of all listed, along with information regarding death, adoption, marriage and divorce. With the help of the registry, vakıfçıs ask about the vocations and whereabouts of those who might be held responsible for the well-being of the supplicant. In the case of older beneficiaries these are often the children, for young widows they are the parents and brothers.

If these family members are poor themselves, their morals are not questioned. But if they are well off, vakıfçıs question why they did not help out. This line of questioning works in two interrelated ways, both interrelated directions: It makes the familial tie both an issue of responsibility and morality. Because familial care responsibilities are taken as natural, their absence is seen as a moral deviance—on either the part of the ‘irresponsible’ relative or the non-receiving supplicant. By extension, if it is seen as possible that the wrongdoing resides with the supplicant, this causes suspicion that leads to further scrutiny. For women supplicants such suspicion has additional implications. For example, in one case, the morals of a young divorced woman were called into question by virtue of the fact that she was not receiving any support from her father or brothers, who had objected to the divorce.

If responsibility is mostly sought from men, morality is often treated as a female issue (for a similar observation from Lebanon see Jawad 2009b). Similarly and with close relation to family honour, morality is assumed to reside in women and hence comes under greater attack when women fall destitute. The most imminent and immediate risk purportedly faced by women upon losing their male relatives is losing their sexual honour. So choosing women as the prime target of beneficence not only stems from the idea of female dependency but also from ideas about the fragility and weakness of female morality. Women may not be expected to work, but they are certainly expected to actively protect their honour. One of the primary tasks of aid organisations is to help women ‘protect’ themselves by providing them a certain level of material assurance (to keep them away from male abuse and prostitution). With all these concerns in mind, what troubles vakıfçıs most are the cases of sex workers. Concerns about public

morality and sex workers' well-being often conflict thus causing tensions that are both internally felt and publicly discussed.

Justice as Relationality

So far I have tried to illustrate the prevailing norms at Kayseri vakıfs that define certain people as eligible to receive provisions. At the same time I have attempted to give examples of how these norms are sidestepped, challenged and discussed; that is, how they are tactically used by vakıfçıs to reach judgements about people's needs and means. I have also briefly argued that non-uniformity in the decision-making process is related to vakıfçıs' concerns about justice and being just. These concerns are an intrinsically relational phenomenon. So far, I have delineated three levels of this relationality: the dialogical relationship between vakıfçıs and supplicants, the vakıfçıs' distributive responsibility to 'possessors of needs', which also refers to unrelated third parties, and the ties between the vakıfçı, the beneficiary and the benefactor established through unalienable donations.

Yet there is one more dimension of this relationality that has been left un-discussed: relations with God, as an omnipresent transcendental judge. For the vakıfçıs of Kayseri, the reason they do what they do is often very simple: they claim to do it for the sake of God. Religious texts and teachings invariably value charitable work, caring about and caring for others in society. Then for beneficence workers, being a vakıfçı is itself an act of piety directed towards gaining God's mercy. But it is at the same time a burden, a risky business compared to other forms of piety, like daily prayers or fasts. What makes this kind of work risky and troublesome (*veballı*) is the possibility of doing an injustice,

since an ultimate judge would evaluate all judgements. If charity is done to please God and if it is certain that God is particularly displeased by injustice, the risk of making unjust decisions becomes overwhelming. This fear is what Neriman, the director of Melikgazi describes as ‘what keeps me awake at night,’ and what makes Beyaz consider giving his efforts up in favour of a safer life track. This is also why, on the first morning of clothing distribution, Erciyes Feneri volunteer women could be found worriedly talking among themselves:

Hatice: I considered not participating in this. I am so afraid of doing injustice. God save us, it is such a responsibility!

Sabahat: And what is worse is we are giving away other people’s donations... I am losing my mind when I think about it; what if I give one person more and the other less?

Ferda: You should not think this much. It is also a matter of kismet you know. For one person you cannot find anything to fit despite all your efforts. Then comes another person and beautiful items almost present themselves. It is her kismet... But, of course, we should not overlook any obvious injustice.

What is striking here is that these people usually stand behind their acts, arguing their justness. But still they are afraid. They may judge their own actions and decisions as just, but theirs is not the final evaluation. Despite all norms, religious precepts, texts, teachings, guidance, and bureaucratic and egalitarian mechanisms, God’s judgement is not accessible to human beings. It is a deeply effective unknown. Without having access to this unknown and ultimately righteous judgement, capacities of human beings to justice are limited from the start. This incapacity postpones a final and ascertainable judgement indefinitely. This dimension of relationality, i.e. a continuous reference to an omnipresent, ultimate but not-immediate judge is, aside from other dimensions, what gives the assessment and decision-making processes their plasticity and fluidity. Within all these relational considerations, no one criterion has any more meaning than as a

tactically and selectively used rhetorical tool for making an argument about what is just and what is unjust.

Bourdieu suggests that “[h]abitus is in cahoots with the fuzzy and the vague. As a generative spontaneity which asserts itself in the improvised confrontation with endlessly renewed situations, it follows a *practical logic*, that of the fuzzy, of the more-or-less, which defines the ordinary relation to the world” (1987; quoted in Wacquant 1992, 22 Wacquant’s translation). The practices of vakıfçıs and the judgements they have to make in the course of becoming *just vakıfçıs*, exhibit this fuzzy logic. Every encounter is an opening to reconsider the criteria of acceptance, past decisions and acts, as well as those not immediately affected by their decisions but whose presence haunts the encounter right from the start. Even if the official criteria of their respective organisations, shared assumptions, stereotyping and prepossessions delimit vakıfçıs’ field of action, with every life story heard or witnessed, they reposition themselves and manoeuvre *with* these limits—challenging, bending, reinterpreting or silently ignoring; not only *within* these limits.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored how vakıfs choose their beneficiaries and the grounds on which this selection is based. I also wanted to illustrate the principles and assumptions underlying the most naturalised criteria, like the male breadwinner, industriousness, family responsibility or what a poor household should rightfully possess. However, as I have contended, neither these criteria nor the assumptions on which they are based are absolute in their applicability. Vakıfçıs in decision-making positions within vakıfs strive

for justice, which cannot be guaranteed through the strict application of these rules. Every encounter demands individualised treatment (however slight the differences between scenarios might be) and this treatment depends greatly on the interaction between vakıfçı and supplicant. It is thus during this interaction that the relational aspects of justice unfold.

In *Seeing Like a State* (1998), James Scott discusses how ‘the poor’ are made ‘legible’ by fitting terms, categories and characteristics that are observable, assessable and amenable to the management and information regimes of modern bureaucracy. He calls this phenomenon a ‘tunnel view’ of the reality. ‘Tunnel view’ is an appropriate metaphor on which to end this chapter. Seen through categories, schemas and check boxes, there is always a fragment of reality, a fragment which is understandable and governable. Yet reality lurks outside the tunnel, complex and unbounded. Attempts by Kayseri vakıfçısı to create more accurate, sharpened and finer criteria by which to judge their claimants never ends, yet outside these criteria—outside the tunnel—in the multi-relational and multi-referential practice of justice, they are in the realm of care and in the realm of ethical complexities. These two realms will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7 ETHICS OF BEING A VAKIFÇI

Among those who work in the field of beneficence in Kayseri, a significant distinction is made between vakıfçıs, the men and women of a vakıf, and hayırsevers, benefactors or philanthropists. Although these two categories are often used descriptively, they are also notably value-laden. Vakıfçı refers to those who put their labour, time and energy into charitable work, whether in private or institutional settings. They are the volunteers, employees, managers, and active board members of charitable organisations. They may also be men and women who do not have any institutional engagement but are still known for ‘devoting their lives’ to beneficence. Vakıfçıs have close contact with the people they help out. Hayırsever, on the other hand, literally means ‘those who love philanthropy’, connoting a lesser degree of hands-on involvement, but moral and financial support from outside as benefactors. Hayırsevers are usually *not* involved in the daily operations of institutions but support them through donations, preferring in particular large-scale projects like the construction of schools or mosques. Of course, most vakıfçıs financially support their institutions and engage in private benefaction by giving money away too, so it is not possible to apprehend this distinction by focusing on the kind and quality of what is given.

Proximity to beneficiaries distinguishes vakıfçı from hayırsever. The philanthropists rarely meet the people their contributions affect unless invited by organisations to observe how they are being put to use. But these occasions are less about engagement

than they are about overseeing the use of money. In contrast, being a vakıfçı involves extensive encounters with the persons in need, as well as occasionally establishing long-term, sustained relations.

This distinction between vakıfçı and hayırsever has important gender and class dimensions. In corollary with the uneven distribution of property ownership among men and women in Kayseri (as throughout Turkey), hayırsevers of the city are almost exclusively men. Although it is quite common to come across schools or soup kitchens named after women, this is because of an established tradition that husbands or sons sponsored civic gifts in commemoration or in the name of women from their families. Yet among vakıfçıs, men and women are equally active, either as volunteers or as paid employees. Again, as a direct derivative of ownership of wealth structures, hayırsevers exclusively belong to upper classes, while among vakıfçıs some industrialists work actively within the organisations they founded, as do workers, who try to survive with their part-time salaries.

In this chapter I focus on the formation of vakıfçı subjectivities through a discussion of the processes of ethical self-formation. Here by ethics I refer to an intersubjective and relational phenomenon that finds both its content and its expression in practices of care (both for self and others) rather than in already defined norms and values. Thus, in this chapter my discussion of the formation of ethical beings particularly refers to the development of capacities to care and give.

Ethical Bodies, Embodied Affects

In *Politics of Piety* (2005), Saba Mahmood discusses the premises of positive ethics in understanding ethical and pious agency. According to her, in post enlightenment thinking, ethics is often conceived as an abstract system of principles, values and regulations (p. 119). In this Kantian tradition, ethical reasoning is more heavily emphasised than ethical practices, which are either seen as habits that do not qualify as virtues or as actualisations of some abstract values and principles. By this understanding, ethics always begins within the person (with critical reasoning) and not always but usually creates a change in the behaviour. Therefore, the direction of ethical transformation is from inside to outside. Yet in positive ethics—Aristotelian ethics—moral actions are seen not as contingent but constitutive elements of the content of the ethical norm (p. 120). Therefore the variety of relationships that can be established between the constitutive elements of the self (including the body, affects, volition and reason) and the accepted norm become a matter of analysis (p. 120). This variety allows transformation to travel in the opposite direction—values and attitudes changing with the alteration of actions and behaviours. Rituals, prayers, fasts and meditation may all be counted as classic examples of technologies of transformation that start from the outside. In this vein, I approach the formation of an ethical being through the ongoing processes of becoming a vakıfçı as a matter of adapting actions, donning new stances and meticulously working on behaviour.

In the Kayseri beneficence field there are, of course, religiously informed norms, which are clear and hardly surprising: a vakıfçı should be indiscriminately compassionate to all creatures of God, be patient, gentle and humble. These norms are repeated piously as

they represent the will of God in the name of being good Muslims. Similar ethical considerations are observed by Jawad (2007; 2009b) in her work on Lebanese religious welfare organisations, among which are Christian and Muslim institutions belonging to various sects. Jawad (2009) gives particular emphasis to the humanitarian aspects of the prevailing ethical standing of the workers at these organisations, and employs a virtue-ethics perspective to suggest that more than being simply normative, the ethical formations of these various actors are a product of character. However insightful is this approach, it could be developed further, for it leaves out the corporeal dimension of ethics. Although ethical arguments, and actors' identification with and employment of these arguments, are important, inquiry and conversation should extend beyond this to explore multiplicity and ambivalence in the bodily cultivation of religious ethics. To do so would allow us to understand how norms are inhabited, challenged or desired.

As I have mentioned, vakıfçıs have first hand, face-to-face encounters with the beneficiaries and supplicants, and they are responsible for the immediate care-giving and care-taking activities their organisations offer. Their daily contact with beneficiaries and supplicants lead vakıfçıs to revise their attitudes (not always intentionally) and force them into situations they would have otherwise avoided. They are impelled by the singularity of the encounter and the intimate content of the care relationship. Their position forces them, first of all, to alter their embodied dispositions against the poor and poverty. Let me illustrate this with an example.

When I asked the female volunteers of Erciyes Feneri how volunteering affected their lives, Aliye explained, 'I have gone beyond myself. I used to refrain from eating strangers' food but I've started eating it. I used to refrain from sitting down in a poor

house but I started to do that. I've witnessed great changes in myself, and I am very happy about it.'

Aliye is a wealthy woman aged over 60. She covers her hair with chic silk scarves and always wears elegant clothes. Her golden-rimmed eyeglasses and rings of precious stones give away her upper-middle-class position at first sight. She is now responsible for running the public bath of a charitable organisation in Kayseri, where she interacts with the poorest women and children of the inner city. Catering to those who do not have access to running water, she is at ease with women roaming around the bath naked, making casual and friendly conversation or smoking in the foyer without the slightest embarrassment about their nakedness. And there, Aliye sits, chats with them, checks their papers, and fortnightly shares the Turkish bath experience, including being washed by one of the employees of the bath. Users of the bathhouse services usually bring some food with them and offer to share their food with employees, including Aliye. She accepts and reciprocates with her own food offerings. She and two employees, who had once been beneficiaries before being offered employment a couple of years prior, eat lunch with a score of naked and half-naked women and children hanging around. Having once been uncomfortable entering homes in slums, she now has the most intimate contact with their inhabitants, albeit not free of conflict and restlessness.

Aliye's experience is not unique. Other vakıfçıs, too, narrate similar stories and are routinely affected by similar daily encounters. These narratives, first, indicate the dispositions these women have had all their lives: Poverty is dirty, even disgusting, which therefore leads to a very visceral and bodily repulsion. Notwithstanding the stories of the poor-but-tidy as a possible exception, there is always a reluctance to

establish physical ties with the poor: eating their food, cuddling their kids and visiting their homes creates discomfort. Second, uprooting these dispositions is possible but only through a tedious, tense and multidirectional process. Let me first briefly dwell on the first point to explore the question of what such a feeling of disgust does.

Affects of poverty

According to Sara Ahmed (2004) emotions reside neither in the subject who feels them, nor in the object that gives rise to the feelings. Instead emotions are a matter of how objects and subjects come into contact. Therefore there is always a reading of a lived history into the encounter that creates the emotions. Certain bodies become objects of disgust as they evoke histories of accumulated and associated signals, as through skin colour, nakedness, odour and sight. However, that these signs are contingent does not in any way diminishes the material reality and effects of the emotion evoked.

Disgust in particular entails proximity between subject and object, and it immediately urges bodies to withdraw. Bodies draw back for fear of contamination. Disgust attests to the fragility and permeability of the skin and the body's openness to such threats from the outside (no matter if these threats have any objective basis). And with this immediate bodily reaction, disgust functions as the perfect mechanism for abjection (Kristeva 1982; Lorde and Clarke 2007). Bodies that cannot be contacted, bodies that have contagious qualities are created at the moment of disgust. Yet neither the emotion itself, nor the effects and 'borders' it produces, can simply be reversed through reflexive processes. 'Emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through the orientations towards and away

from others' (Ahmed 2004: 4). Therefore emotions bear a weight more onerous than those of psychic states, and they are difficult to erase. Reinforced by a lifetime of material and discursive iterations, the contingent associations that entangle certain cues with certain emotions can only be undone with diligent bodily work. In our case this bodily work has its great significance in the possibility of subverting abjection.

Accounts of poverty alleviation and containment describe in detail how the emotions of disgust and fear of contamination have shaped policies addressing the poor and are affected by the discourses that inform those policies (M. Dean 1991; Morris 2001). Images of beggars with missing limbs and open wounds, pauperised women threatening the psychological and physiological well-being of society through sexually transmitted diseases they might disseminate, and street children sneaking into clean family homes may all be recalled from a vivid reservoir of social imagery. Even if these seem too marginal to invoke a common feeling of disgust, milder images of shanty towns with open sewage, little snotty faces on rubbish heaps smiling for cameras, leaking ceilings, and that very particular smell of dampness, feel all too familiar, evidence that poverty itself is often perceived as dirty. In Kayseri, these images are even intensified with reference to local Gypsies and Kurds, who are doubly stigmatised when poor. With or without an element of racialisation, these images and recollections of poverty work through sensations and bodily responses.

The narratives of vakıfçı women in Kayseri are no different in making use of such sensationalist images. A very palpable sense of lacking, not only of certain comforts or basic survival requirements but also of assumed hygiene and cleanliness standards, accompany their vivid descriptions of poverty. Yet, in a twist, disgust is replaced with

compassionate contact in a particular strain of these stories. The common antagonist in this type of narrative is Nevin Akyurt. Until her death in 2004, Akyurt had been the local heroine of the vakıf field in Kayseri. She mobilised the wealthy to attend the needs of the city's poor by establishing these foundations, and encouraged women to take an active part in their operation. Yet, as these women's stories attest, the most impressive aspect of her dedication was her private acts of benevolence, which often involved very intimate care. Consider what two of her disciples told me during our informal conversations:

One day, she took me along to [visit] Zehra. She was taking continuous care of that lady, who had serious mental health problems. We went to her place, which was simply a dump. She was living there with several wild dogs she used to sleep with, cuddling. I guess this was the way she protected herself and also stayed warm. She was a wild lady, never letting anybody close. She used to scream and attack strangers that approached her. But she trusted Nevin Abla deeply. So when we went there I was really frightened by the scene and by her looks. I hesitated to get out of the car. Nevin Abla told me to follow her. We approached Zehra. She had that wild and dangerous look at first. Then she recognised Nevin Abla and visibly relaxed. Nevin Abla went to her side, patted her hair and talked with her. Then she wanted her to get into the car. Then, we took Zehra to Nevin Abla's house, where she personally washed her. Then she made her sit on the carpet and started to pick lice from her hair. She cut her hair, washed her clothes and later we took her back to her place. I could not possibly have touched that woman but Nevin Abla was like this. There was a lot we should have learnt from her (Neriman).

There was a very old couple, living on their own in a rotting apartment. She found them somehow. The old lady was paralysed, so she was in diapers. Her husband was doing his best but his condition was also miserable. Nevin Abla used to visit them regularly, change the diapers, clean the lady up, wash her and take their clothes to her house to wash. She would even comb her hair and embrace her like a child (İpek).

We learn more, like that Nevin Akyurt would never hesitate to enter anyone's home, sit there and eat what was offered. She would play with kids. She would dress the most terrible of wounds. And in any case she would establish physical contact with people she was trying to help as a natural requirement of care. There is certainly a disciplinary

aspect to this extension of care, which will be discussed later in the chapter. For now, I will stick to how Akyurt's example is interpreted among Kayseri vakıfçısı. The legend of Nevin Akyurt first and foremost relies on transgression of usual physical boundaries between strangers, boundaries created especially through the emotion of disgust. These boundaries, certainly, have very strong class and ethnic dimensions, yet in the first place these are boundaries between people not immediately and intimately related, whose skins are strange to each other. Therefore the most significant quality of Akyurt in the eyes of the vakıfçısı is this extension of intimate care across difference and social distance.

Yet all these stories carry a sense of exceptionality; they are almost always followed with the addendum that it was not possible for Akyurt's disciples to match her example, that she was extraordinary. By being exceptional, anecdotes about Akyurt often function as reminders and invocations of the normality of recoiling in disgust, while at the same time they allude to the possibility that this norm may not be set in stone. In that sense the legend of Akyurt provides a regulative ideal, one which is unreachable but, in striving to emulate her, opens a path towards ethical transformation.

This ethical transformation, as exemplified by Akyurt and expressed in the self-narratives of Aliye and the other vakıfçısı, does not necessarily imply a radical change in the conception of the poor as dirty. While it has led to a habitual presumption that they are not, behavioural change on their part neither begins nor ends with such a change in assumptions. It is rather a piecemeal transformation that resides in action more so than in a reflexive questioning of beliefs and conceptions. The crux of the ethical transformation is acting it out before becoming it.

At the risk of losing sight of nuances and personal differences, I can sketch an overview of the process as such: A woman decides to do some ‘good’ for the needy of her town for any number of reasons. She certainly has the aforementioned negative predispositions and embodied feelings, but figures being there will push her into situations she has never experienced before. As she acts out her decision, sometimes even in spite of herself, these actions settle in her body and conscience, slowly evolving into an ethical habitus.

Positive ethics

In order to explore ‘the work that bodily practices perform in creating’ this ethical subject (Mahmood 2005, 160), I return to the work of Mahmood and the source of her inspiration, Michel Foucault. In his later work, Foucault (1997a; 1997b) approached ethics as ‘care for oneself’, by which he meant the operations of a person on his or her own soul, thoughts, body and feelings. This is different than the established conception of ethics as a product of mental capacities and contemplation. Foucault’s notion of ethics is primarily embodied and acted out. This approach is built on the notion of ethics in Greek antiquity and especially in Aristotle. Given the influence of Aristotle on paradigmatic Islamic scholars like Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, Mahmood (2005) observes a very similar understanding and practice of ethical formations in Islam.

According to Aristotle, ‘States of character arise out of like activities’ and virtue inhabits one’s body only through working on it. Virtue is not what we have as part of our nature but it is natural to strive for it and be able to build towards it. Yet virtue is learned only through acting virtuously. Continuing with Aristotle, ‘For the things we

have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts' (2002, bk. 2:1).

Doing in order to become requires a significant level of discipline and repetition because only in this way does a virtue become ingrained in character and habitus, which drive an unconscious, unpremeditated repertoire of actions like those of Nevin Akyurt. The idea of an acquisition of virtue by relentlessly acting it out has significant ontological implications. First of all, it implies an understanding of the human body not as the vessel for inner qualities but as an agent for sowing and fostering these qualities. It is a body that is formed by the ethical transformation it is performing. Therefore, it is malleable and affective, as well as effective and active. In order to explain this paradoxical notion, I will borrow from Mahmood's reading of the Foucauldian concept of docility. She argues that:

The capacity for action is enabled and created by specific relations of subordination. To clarify this paradox, we might consider the example of a virtuoso pianist who submits herself to the often painful regime of disciplinary practice, as well as to the hierarchical structures of apprenticeship, in order to acquire the ability—the requisite agency—to play the instrument with mastery. Importantly, her agency is predicated upon her ability to be taught, a condition classically referred to as 'docility'. Although we have come to associate docility with the abandonment of agency, the term literally implies the malleability required of someone in order for her to be instructed in a particular skill or knowledge. (ibid. 29)

This brings us to docility, which means not only being submissive and controlled, but also being plastic enough to be formed, taught and shaped; hence docility has the capacity to subject one to discipline and also to situations that may create pain, discomfort or anxiety. As a condition of ethical formation, docility involves both being open to the interventions and interlocutions of trusted masters-of-the-trade, and also

subjecting oneself to tedious control and repetition. It is acting upon the self as much as it is allowing others to act upon that self. While discussing my methodology, I suggested, upon reflection on my experience in Kayseri, that rendering oneself docile is a precondition of embodied and internalised learning. Now, I expect, the methodological and substantive significance of this are better linked. If docility is allowing one's dispositions to change through repetition of bodily performances and being receptive to pedagogical formation by a mentor, in Kayseri Nevin Akyurt served as a mentor of this kind, to whom most of today's vakıfçıs have once submitted themselves.

Discipline

Just as care for the self involves discipline of the self, care for the other contains an aspect of discipline as well. Remember the quotes from Nevin Akyurt's friends and disciples, which I had used to illustrate the significance of the transgression of bodily boundaries among Kayseri vakıfçıs. One more strikingly consistent theme in these stories was that Akyurt had been cleaning the people she had cared for. She took Zehra into her home, washed her and picked lice from her hair. She washed the old lady and changed her diaper. Akyurt was certainly caring for these people in a very corporeal sense, but at the same time hers was an effort to make their bodies meet her standards. What she recognised as a need—cleanliness—was at the same time a terrain of discipline and control. This mutuality of care and discipline crystallised before my eyes when I witnessed Neriman and Beyaz's failed attempts to 'help' a family.

One day Neriman, the director of Melikgazi, received a call from a woman about a neighbouring flat that was full of garbage. This neighbour called Neriman for help after the stench had become unbearable and their efforts to convince the mother of the household to clean had ended in a violent argument. Neriman called Beyaz, and they went to see the condition of the flat. It was so full of all sorts of junk that it was no longer possible to enter some of the rooms. The household consisted of two teenage girls, their mother (who was collecting the rubbish) and a bedridden father. The conditions of the two young girls, the terminally ill father and the mentally ill mother moved Neriman and Beyaz deeply and they decided to do something for the family. Registration to the Erciyes Feneri aid scheme was the first and easiest step to take. They then convinced the girls to empty the house, made arrangements to keep the family away during that process and finally called the municipality to ask for trucks. Then, everything in the house except a few items of personal use, was loaded onto the trucks and taken to the city dumping grounds. Neriman got the house cleaned and whitewashed. Both she and Beyaz used their contacts to find new furniture and finally took the family to their renewed and refurbished home, expecting them to be happy and grateful. But the mother was inconsolably upset with the situation. Neriman tried to arrange psychiatric care for her, but she refused and finally chased her from the house. Neriman did not give up. She was determined to 'save the girls even if it was impossible to help the mother.' This proved difficult, however.

I met the girls in Neriman's office a few weeks after the big cleaning operation. Neriman invited them to share the latest developments on the issue of private school tuition they had said they needed. Then, we all got into Beyaz's van and went to see the house. The girls were not happy with this idea but they obeyed Neriman's wish. The

interior of the flat was covered in muddy cat paws. All sorts of rubbish lay on the floor and furniture. The house was filled with a smell that made breathing almost impossible. Without a word, Beyaz went outside to wait for us. I sincerely wished I could have joined him as I nearly fainted from the smell. Neriman was totally disheartened. In a sweet voice (actually in an almost weeping tone) she begged the girls to keep the flat clean. They stared blankly back at her. She shifted to an angrier tone and told them of the amount of work she had undertaken to make the flat 'an inhabitable place'. Both the girls appeared indifferent to the lecture. Neriman was helpless. So we left. On the way back she was truly upset and she dropped a few tears. She told me how many times she had told the girls to keep the house clean, even promising to bring them gifts on the condition of cleanliness. Apparently nothing had worked. Gradually Neriman gave up the effort and left the family to themselves.

From our conversations throughout this process and from the way she approached the girls, I knew Neriman really cared about the family and their well-being. She did what she thought was best to care for them, yet she neither established the relationship she wanted with the girls nor did she accomplish her task of cleaning the flat. But on the way to failure she showed me how care was intricately related to discipline (or in this case even to coercion). This *problématique* of discipline requires further attention.

In a Foucauldian sense discipline is a modality of power which aims to effect the conduct of individuals in prescribed ways. Foucault's intellectual interest had been in the technologies of discipline people were subjected to via total institutions like prisons or asylums, and on the disciplines (as professions) that institutionalised these technologies with production of knowledge (Foucault 1975; Foucault 1976). A

significant number of these disciplinary professions are related to care work, like medicine and psychiatry. There is also an expanding literature that employs Foucauldian thinking to approach others like poverty alleviation (M. Dean 1991), social work (Gilliom 2001) and nursing (Hugman 1991).

According to Fox (1995), as much as the literatures coming out of these disciplines has contributed to professionalisation and thus to disciplinary power, the social sciences have approached the issue of care as if it were determined primarily by way of discipline. Fox calls this emphasis 'the vigil of care' with reference to Florence Nightingale, who christened vigilance as one of the pillars of the nursing profession. Care, practised as vigil, is an activity of surveillance and an exertion of disciplinary power over those being cared for. While Fox limits his analysis to the discourse of care, in the daily experience of care relationships, this vigil becomes even more prominent, just as it became evident in Neriman's campaign against the 'junk-house' and its inhabitants.

Discipline is also evident in the creation and application of selection criteria for beneficiaries, for this process has the potential to push beneficiaries into a rigid table of categories. House inspections performed to cross-check supplicants' stories and to witness first-hand the level of poverty could well be seen as prime disciplinary techniques. These techniques turn supplicants and their lives into an object of vakıfçıs' gaze, which sweeps rooms, furniture and household members to ensure applicants' conditions qualify them for registration. As in the case of municipal worker Sena and her camcorder, technological devices can be used to extend the gaze to those unable to be present for the first-hand evaluation.

But, as I suggested in Chapter 6, these inspections often serve as an opportunity for the supplicant to detail her story, establish a personal connection with vakıfçıs and negotiate the terms and conditions of care, as much as they form a backdrop for disciplinary interventions. They offer supplicants a feeling of recognition and vakıfçıs satisfaction from their work. According to Fox (1995) what takes place on such occasions of mutual understanding is care-as-gift; a possibility, he argues, that is severely overlooked in social sciences. He identifies care-as-gift with feelings and virtues he derives from Helen Cixous' (1996) work: generosity, trust, love, affection, benevolence, patience and curiosity. In Cixous' formulation these 'feminine' qualities of 'the Gift' are counterpoised to the elements of 'the masculine realm of the Proper': property, propriety, possession, identity and dominance.

Fox's (1995) understanding of gift is strictly unidirectional, i.e. as generosity; therefore it cannot recognise the fact that even gift relations can be disciplinary, although they were enacted with true feelings, as listed above under the title *the Gift*. As I elaborated in Chapter 1, gift is primarily a relationship, not a thing that is given. And within this relationship, power and status can be played out, as can equality and mutual respect. I therefore suggest focusing on the encounter itself and locating discipline and gift where they belong—in the realm of intersubjectivity, rather than categorically naming some practices 'discipline' and others 'gift'.

Such a view would also critique one aspect of Foucault's understanding of ethics as care for the self. Foucault's genealogy may appear to be strictly about *the self*: an inward looking, non-porous and unified self that diligently performs mental, spiritual and corporeal work on itself. Although he mentions in passing that care for oneself is a

precondition of care for others and vice-versa (Foucault 1997b), the problem of others on this ethical quest remains under-theorised. All in all, however important it is to recognise embodiment and the element of discipline, Foucault's view needs development from the standpoint of recognising ethics as one's relationship to the other (Gilligan 1982). So far, it should have been clear that the core of the ethical transformation I have been describing about Kayseri vakıfçısı is necessarily located in encounter with others; it is self-formation that is not contained within the self, but that comes into being in the realm of the social, in personal relations and connections. It can therefore only be understood using an intersubjective approach. Intersubjective theory is vast and a further discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But there is one strand of scholarly work which owes a lot to intersubjective theory and has to be studied here: the ethics of care. That is because I contend that this is a particularly relevant way of shifting the locus of ethics from the individual to the relationship. If ethics is an activity as Aristotle claims, then it is an activity of extending care to others within the realm of vakıf work in Kayseri and elsewhere.

An Ethics of Care

In contemporary social science literature, questions concerning the issue of care have often been dealt with by feminist scholars, who work relentlessly to move this subject from its 'peripheral' location—where it is conceived as a 'natural' maternal attitude—towards political, ethical and psychological debates surrounding the issues of human societies. Care is an act of concern for the other, as well as an active undertaking that comes out of this concern. It is a fundamental part of human lives, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. It is a daily necessity for human life, and not merely in

times of crises, like in the case of hospital care. Therefore, it is worth every effort to revalue care in all its societal dimensions. However, in this section I will offer only a very selective reading of this literature, delving into the intersubjective and relational aspects of care.

Joan Tronto defines care with certain ‘core values’ and phases: (1) attentiveness and caring about, (2) responsibility and taking care of, (3) competence in meeting needs and care giving, and (4) responsiveness and care receiving (1993, 106–107). These values have since informed many theorisations of the ethics of care (Sevenhuijsen 1998; Sevenhuijsen 2003a; Sevenhuijsen 2003b; Komter 2005; Hollway 2006). Thus, a brief exploration would help clarifying the concept of care as it is used in this chapter.

According to Tronto (1993) attentiveness is the starting point of any caring relationship. Care begins with caring about, and hence a recognition of need, which captures the attention. Without attentiveness it is not possible to meet needs, as they would not even be acknowledged as such. Attentiveness is especially related to understanding *the other’s* needs, his or her particularity as a separate human being and the requirements of this particularity. Yet I share Hollway’s (2006) concerns regarding Tronto’s approach. Her conceptualisation of attentiveness is too dependent on voluntaristic and rationalistic assumptions. On the contrary, as Hollway argues, attentiveness stems from processes that are less volitional than it first seems, usually functioning at an unconscious and embodied level.

The second value, responsibility, assumes the duty of meeting recognised needs. It is therefore similar to answering a call and taking action. Through responsibility, the

abstract notion of caring about turns into a solid and practical caring for. Yet assuming responsibility does not make one capable of providing 'good-enough' care. The performance of care requires skills, habits and bodily orientations that cannot be obtained in a moment, but can only be aggregated over a lifetime of care experiences. This brings us to the third requirement of care: competence. Competence in the provision of care only comes with practice, as care can only be learned by doing. Finally, responsiveness as a skill is about the interaction between the give and receiver of care, about the openness of each to the other's situation and reactions. This value, along with attentiveness, emphasises the intersubjective nature of care relations.

Wendy Hollway, a critical psychologist informed by psychoanalysis and object relations theory, identifies two developmental processes that are key to acquiring these values: identification and differentiation. Hollway (2006) notes that although these processes are chronological in that they appear at infancy, they are also simultaneous over a lifetime. All our lives, identification is vital for recognising and responding to others' needs, while differentiation is critical in order not to dominate and oppress the other with the act of care. Hollway bases her theorisation of the capacity to care on the 'tension between experiencing the others needs and one's own difference' (ibid. 125).

Similarly, Richard Sennett (2003) suggests that in order to care, one should initially and *falsely* (as Adam Smith argued) assume somebody else's pain as his or her own. So an act of care 'begins as a mistake', but at that moment of identification, one should recognise that the carer and the cared for are actually separate beings with different needs. This simultaneous happening of the 'mistake' of identification with the other and the correction of this 'mistake' is the precondition for mutual respect.

When differentiation and identification are not seen as rivalling processes but as orthogonal axes of the process of subjectivity formation in relational terms, attentiveness and responsiveness find their true basis (Hollway 2006, 109). But it is important to acknowledge the inherent ambivalence and fluidity of these qualities and the phases of care that accompany them. The axes of identification and differentiation both have extreme ends towards which one can slide. The swing between assumptions of omnipotent knowledge about the other's needs and effective differentiation, as well as the swing between over-identification (hence unbearable pain) and dis-identification (abjection/othering), is at best managed individually in each and every instance. Sometimes the pain of identification is so high that the other's needs may be completely ignored. Sometimes the caregiver exercises domination over the one in need, operating under the assumption that all the needs and desires of the other are transparent to the caregiver. Other times the individual feels his or her autonomy is under threat because of the neediness of the other. Yet there are also times in which care may become a pleasure in itself because of the pleasure/relief it provides the cared for. Maybe capacities to care can best be conceptualised as capacities to manage the swing of these pendulums in such a way that the particular needs of the other are both recognised and met within the intersubjective space of conscious, unconscious, bodily, verbal and affective communication, as acknowledged by mutually interrelated individual subjects.

Kayseri vakıfçısı cannot always manage the swings of the pendulum between identification and differentiation. All scenarios I listed above are observable in their interactions with beneficiaries. There are times when the needs of a beneficiary are completely overlooked, usually with excuses made about the unavailability of resources. Other times, identification is so strong that an encounter leads to sleepless

nights and feelings of pain and incapacity. There are even cases, as with the scenario between Neriman and the two girls, when a vakıfçı's disciplinary desires, coupled with improper differentiation of herself from those whom she cared for, ends in emotional outburst. But there are also times in which for some, the act of care leads to satisfaction and a feeling of mutual recognition and understanding. How this is to be achieved and how the balance is to be maintained is a matter of constant discussion among the vakıfçis themselves. Warning each other, reflecting on past conduct, critiquing the actions of third parties, all these help shape and maintain a norm as a way of coming to terms with this highly affective swing. Yet as they commonly acknowledge, this tension is only lived through and managed by an accumulation of embodied and unconscious knowledge stemming from experience.

In order to explicate the dimension of embodiment further, I will cite Hollway, wherein she defines identification:

The psychoanalytic concept of identification embraces processes that are conscious and unconscious, embodied, affective and cognitive, both primary (unthought) and secondary (thought) processes. Without the psychological capacity to identify with others across the boundary that comes to define one individual from another, compassion and concern would be impossible. We can only know what another person is experiencing through empathy or 'fellow feeling'; that is, *through using ourselves as an instrument of understanding* (2006, 14, italics mine).

Hollway's idea of using ourselves as instruments to understand the other's experience illustrates the level of significance the role bodies (not only as flesh and blood but also as the locus of senses, sentiments and reactions) plays in the process of identification. Maurice Hamington (2004) develops this aspect of care further with the concept of 'caring knowledge'. For him, caring knowledge is most importantly knowledge of the body. Bodies communicate and understand more than what is available to the

consciousness. Consider the body that recoils with a sense of disgust even when the subject's intentions had been to remain indifferent and respectful. Or consider the involuntary cry of the witness to an accident, as if she herself, not a stranger, had been hit. Identification, in that sense, is most importantly the embodied knowledge of having a body that is fragile and a psyche that hurts, bleeds, enjoys and longs just like others. Of course, identification does not imply the subject understands the other to be exactly like the self. Healthy development goes hand in hand with the process of differentiation, and the recognition of the other as a unique self (Hollway 2006). It also means approaching the body as the site of otherness, of divergent needs and sensitivities.

In an attempt to think about the ethics of care through the lens of Merleau-Ponty, Hamington (2004) approaches care as a phenomenon that is ultimately embodied, and argues that bodies are not only objects or instruments of care, but that they are also the very possibility of care. This possibility is related to the unarticulated and often unconscious (and also involuntary) nature and primacy of a body's knowledge, and its communication of this knowledge through behaviours. Because of this, as Hamington argues, 'as a corporeal potential, care can be cultivated or diminished through practices and habits' (ibid. 5). Similarly, Selma Sevenhuijsen argues that 'the core idea of the ethic of care in my view is that care is a practice, and that it is crucial for developing a moral attitude—and thus also a moral vocabulary—of care by engaging in the practice of care. By doing so, care can in fact grow into a disposition, a part of our everyday thinking and doing' (Sevenhuijsen 2003b, 18; quoted in Hollway 2006, 9–10).

The vakıfçıs of Kayseri practice care in order to fulfil their duties through the quotidian of their work. They learn by doing, by bodily involvement; and as I have suggested

before, they experience an ethical transformation as part and parcel of this bodily involvement. This transformation shifts their boundaries and potentially their notions of dirtiness and cleanliness, which are often indexes of racial and class discrimination (for a wider discussion of how cleanliness functions as a tool of distinction see Douglas 2003). What requires emphasis here is the fact that care as a practice of ethics is not a process that starts and ends with an individual self. It is a relational and intersubjective phenomenon, an interaction, an exchange. As such, care has an ontological proximity to gift, and certain aspects of gift relations could well be extrapolated to offer a deeper comprehension of care relations.

An Ethics of Giving

In June 2009, I spent a day with Nihal and Fatma, travelling all around Kayseri in Nihal's car. These two women had participated in the founding of this vakıf and had remained involved as volunteers. The organisation helped poor couples who wanted to marry but did not have the means to do so, and today we were on a mission to do supplicant home visits. With the help of sponsors, the organisation provided basic household items, furniture, a wedding gown for the bride and a suit for the groom. They would also cover associated legal fees. Its employees used a checklist for preliminary supplicant assessments with the aim of verifying their poverty and/or orphanage. This was followed by the home visits to cross-check the stories.

On this particular day, our trip began with getting lost on the outskirts of the city such that we spent more than an hour finding the first address, which had been inadequately reported. The supplicant's house was situated in a garden, typical of the summer homes

of Kayseri's wealthy, but it was visibly old and weary. It was a lovely day, so although the lady of the house invited us in, Fatma and Nihal preferred to sit on the benches in the garden. When we were settled the lady rushed back inside to make us tea, despite Fatma and Nihal's objections. When she came back, she told us that she was trying to arrange her son's wedding. She was facing difficulties because all the family's wealth had been lost as a result of her ex-husband's lifestyle. She was concerned that her application remain hidden because she did not want her in-laws to learn about their financial problems. Fatma was particularly taken by the story and openly empathised with the woman's wish. After checking with Nihal (without saying a word, but by exchanging a knowing glance and a nod) Fatma then approved the application and explained the necessary next steps. We sat there for almost an hour, sipped two glasses of tea, and as we were leaving Fatma and Nihal hugged the woman and kissed her youngest child, a ten-year-old boy, affectionately.

At our second stop on the other end of the city, we were welcomed into a shanty, bereft of even the most basic household items. There, the mother of the house offered us peanuts and tea. Again, we spent nearly an hour chatting on and around the story of the bride-to-be. Fatma and Nihal offered them advice about how to get more than the routine package, consisting of a bedroom set, an oven and a sofa set. We left the house hugging and kissing everyone—including the neighbours, who happened to drop by while we were there. When we got to the car, Fatma told Nihal to put a note on the family's file indicating that they should be given extra food boxes.

There were ten addresses on our list that day and it was already past noon. So Nihal and Fatma discussed refusing any food or drinks, and cutting the visits as short as possible.

They wished to stick to their primary aim, which was investigation. But we ended up eating a plateful of cherries at our next stop. Fatma and Nihal had to spare the next day (which was a Sunday) finishing the visits, since we managed to make it to fewer than half the addresses on our list.

On that particular day, Fatma and Nihal exemplified many of the elements of care that define vakıfçı ethics in Kayseri. They were attentive to the stories of supplicants and responsive to their particular needs. They were also congenial in their attitudes and established physical contact freely and frequently. They were well equipped to ease the anxiety the supplicants likely felt in relation to *being inspected*. Moreover, they looked quite comfortable receiving offerings from beneficiaries. I suggest that every single one of these elements of conduct has strong ethical and political implications.

I have discussed the meaning and significance of touch earlier in this chapter, and suggested that crossing the physical boundaries created by established emotional histories is an important aspect of extending care to the supplicants of Kayseri vakıfs. But unlike the examples from Nevin Akyurt's life, those instances of contact are not often directed towards any concrete physical need, like dressing wounds or washing the elderly or the disabled. Physical contact, in the form of a hug, a firm handshake or a lending hand for changing socks and shoes, usually performs a different function: recognition of the other as a fellow human being, and therefore, in a very subtle way, subverting the abjection that often taints similar encounters. Hence, what Fatma and Nihal actually gave through their tight embraces was the gift of recognition.

The second element that requires attention is Fatma and Nihal's easiness with accepting offerings from beneficiaries. While they declared to the host each time that it was exceptional for them to accept something from supplicants, the proceedings of the day attested otherwise. They never refused anything or established boundaries that would have hinted a refusal from the start. If their discourse of not accepting gifts was a declaration of a certain understanding of professionalism, their practices referred to a more powerful calling, or better entrenched ethical values about personal relations: a gift obliges acceptance.

This obligation is worth dwelling on. Although they begin with an ethical dedication, moments of contact between vakıfçıs and beneficiaries involve an obvious inequality of power. While one of the parties has an immediate need that asks to be taken care of, the other party has the power to decide whether or not to attend to that need. For vakıfçıs, it is easy to cause injury. For beneficiaries, shame and humiliation are never far off. How this inequality is to be managed is often posed as an ethical question. Resorting openly to the paradigm of gift is an often-used strategy in the face of this question. In order to understand how gift helps resolve some of these tensions, we need to remember the features of gift discussed in detail in the introduction and Chapter 1. As I elaborated there, contrary to common understandings of voluntariness, gift is defined by obligation: obligation to give, obligation to accept and obligation to reciprocate. Only when this cycle is smoothly completed, or when completion is left open over time, goes the given thing acquire the status of gift. If the cycle is broken because of an interruption to the cycle of obligatory acts, this causes a crisis in the relationship the gift upholds.

Keeping this in mind, it should be clear why refusing certain offerings might insult the beneficiaries with whom Fatma and Nihal were interacting. In the context of vakıfçı-suppliant interactions, a glass of tea or a plateful of cherries constitutes a gift. When they are rejected without acceptable cause (like health problems) it becomes a problem of recognition of personal value, for a gift is inalienable from its giver. These small offerings are at the same time counter-gifts given in return for the vakıfçıs' interest in the suppliant's case, as well as for the anticipated support from the institutions. This brings us to another effect of gift: that is utilised as an ethical means by to handle inequality.

By obligating a return, gift, essentially, has a levelling effect. Its reciprocal nature does not delete inequalities. But because it recognises every actor involved in the gift relationship first and foremost as a giver, it is ontologically a relation between equals, i.e. persons who are equal in their capacity to give. In that sense everyone is *rich* enough to be able to give and everybody is *poor* enough to receive something from the other. The positions of giver and receiver are interchangeable. Indeed, they have to be interchanged if the gift is to be completed. So, accepting beneficiaries' offerings (which includes peanuts as well as prayers) is recognising them as givers. What they give does not have to match what they were given, for gift resists calculation and symmetry anyway.

Conclusion

I started this chapter by describing a distinction Kayseri vakıf workers make between two types of involvement with vakıfs. This distinction is between hayırsevers and

vakıfçısı. Hayırsevers are philanthropists who support vakıfs with their donations, otherwise their involvement is limited. Vakıfçısı, on the other hand, actively work at vakıfs and have close contact with their beneficiaries. This chapter has been dedicated to exploring the implications of this contact.

I suggested that by being in touch with beneficiaries, vakıfçısı render themselves amenable to the effects of contact as part of their self-formation as ethical beings. Therefore, as much as being a hayırsever is a hygienic way of (non)engagement, being a vakıfçı makes one susceptible to the other's material and inner world, hence allowing transgression of established barriers. These barriers not only find expression in status and class signs, opinions and bigotry against the poor, but also have an unconscious and corporeal dimension. There are palpable bodily boundaries between the poor and well-to-do of Kayseri, and vakıfçısı' ethical transformations involve shifting these boundaries and slowly working on their class habitus.

I have tried to theorise this particular form of transformation with a discussion on positive ethics and argued that what gives this particular ethical formation its strength is its practice as care. So I have relocated ethics from the sphere of religious canons to that of the lived experience of care, as an empathetic encounter with the other. Such an approach has two broader implications. First, ethics becomes a matter of formations, and of becoming rather than normative discourse. Second, it is located in the intersubjective realm, where one person's self-understanding, as well as behaviours, are developed in relation to the other's.

Finally, I discussed how gift informs the ethical dimensions of these encounters. The approach of care as gift-act in itself is widely accepted, but in order to make the argument more explicit, I turned to the etiquette of giving and receiving things, as illustrated by some vakıfçıs. I argued that accepting what is given is as important as giving in order for a gift to be a genuine gift. Therefore, accepting counter-gifts is part of vakıfçı ethics, communicating respect and recognition to beneficiaries. I will further discuss the issue of respect in the concluding chapter.

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter I explored the ethical transformation of vakıfçıs while they practised care for the beneficiaries of their organisations. I also mentioned that vakıfçıs distinguished themselves from the hayırsevers of the town by their involvement in this hands-on care work. In the eyes of vakıfçıs, hayırsevers' support for vakıfs is never enough, because these wealthy businessmen are allegedly more concerned with conspicuous endowments, such as buildings, than with providing assistance for *an anonymous mass of needy people*. Indeed, these people are destined to remain anonymous to hayırsevers, while being personally known by vakıfçıs. I suggested that it is there the rupture lies between these two types of beneficence actors, and that this rupture has important ethical and political consequences. The ethical implications have already been discussed; to conclude this dissertation I will focus on the political possibilities that arise from this cleavage.

Vakıfçıs' boundaries and bodily limits became prone to change as a result of their work experience, even though these boundaries had been part of their class habitus shaped by a negative discourse towards poverty. Therefore, these boundaries are not easy to overcome or to displace. However, the result of these unavoidable encounters, combined with aspirations to become better Muslims, was the cultivation of empathy among vakıfçıs—a fellow feeling, which is not restricted to their peers. The core of this

empathy is recognition of the other through identification: identification with precariousness and mortality, the immediacy of physical needs, and the challenge of taking life's blows with dignity. Through this empathy, class barriers become porous and can occasionally be crossed. This might be a minor outcome, but it is significant nevertheless, because it is an important lesson about 'respectful' techniques of welfare provision.

The distinction between hayırsevers and vakıfçıs can be mapped onto the model developed by Turkish social scientist Tanıl Bora (2009). Reflecting on ways of fighting poverty, Bora suggests the analytical use of four typologies: social rights, charity, solidarity and self-organisation. Social rights refer to the content of social citizenship as understood within the framework of welfare states, whereas self-organisation refers to community and grassroots organisations that either aim to provide through its own resources or fight for these rights to be provided. These two forms of welfare provision to needy members of society either address the state or turn to the community for self-sufficiency. Charity and solidarity, on the other hand, share the characteristic of being dependent on other peoples' will to share their wealth with those in need. But the similarity between the two stops here. They are different in their implications and potentialities. While charity is giving without establishing any personal relationships, with the recognition that a hint of intimacy may turn the encounter into one of obligation, solidarity aims for exactly what charity tries to avoid: establishing personal contact. Welfare provision through beneficence swings between charity and solidarity because of these characteristics, which reflect the rupture between vakıf workers and benefactors. Solidarity is the potential outcome of contact, not of gift-giving as such.

At a time when social sciences seem occupied with understanding the consequences of spatial segregation in urban centres, of gated communities and slums, of the spatial and hierarchical imprint of increasingly uneven income distribution, of network societies and redundant populations that are not even a node in these networks; in short, with social distances stretching to an unbearable extent, to talk about potentialities for cross-class, cross-status solidarities may seem utopian. Certainly, the encounters themselves do not guarantee any understanding of equality. On the contrary, they may turn into stages for the performance of class divisions, social stigmata and power inequality. But, on occasion, when the parties involved are tuned into each other's stories and needs, something else may be born: mutual respect.

Richard Sennett's *Respect in a World of Inequality* (2003) diagnoses contemporary societies as suffering from a scarcity of respect, despite the fact that this precious substance is completely free of charge. He then contemplates the sources of inequality and how disrespect is implicated in these inequalities in modern societies. Sennett argues that the modern code of respect includes three dicta making it possible to be respected and to feel self-respect: 'make something of yourself, take care of yourself and help others' (p. 260). All three have the effect of emphasising and creating inequalities. First of all, not everybody has the same ability to make something out of himself or herself: people differ in their talents, mental capacities and physical conditions. Second, not everybody is able take care of himself or herself. Dependency is an inescapable aspect of life, whether it comes in the form of disability, age-related health conditions or poverty. And, finally, not everybody is given the same chances to help others and participate in community building. Welfare provision is a territory where all three, especially the last two, of these bases for disrespect are structurally rife.

Sennett puts forth a couple of modest proposals to build respect within relations and encounters that are marked by inequality. As an antidote to the dictum of independence, he suggests admitting just claims of adult dependency. Chapter 6 of this dissertation is devoted to analysis of the task of identifying and recognising these claims. Clearly, vakıfçılık, in general, is based on a recognition of dependency. However, the question of what constitutes a just claim of dependency does not have an easy answer and, as I have shown, is open to contestation and negotiation. Vakıfs develop criteria to determine just bases for acceptance and rejection. In that sense, ‘seeing like a waqf’ is not much different than ‘seeing like a state’ (Scott 1998). Official categories and acceptance criteria aim to make supplicants legible and manageable in a fashion similar to modern technologies of governmentality. However, as impossible as it is to argue that state policies are uniformly applied by ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky 2010), it is equally unrealistic to assume that vakıfçıs uniformly follow the procedures of their respective organisations. Just as the employees of the state who interact with citizens on a daily basis, vakıfçıs have discretion over the extent to which they follow the procedures. In the context of vakıfs, deciding on who ‘our poor’ will be, and thus who has needs that create rightful entitlements, requires a relational and fluid notion of justice. Understanding the needs of the other, as I have also shown, is not a straightforward process. It is, in the intensity of encounter, about finding a momentary balance in the pendulum’s swing between identification and differentiation, between using your own experience as a human being to understand the other and recognising the uniqueness of the other’s condition and needs. But first and foremost, it is a process of acknowledging that other’s vulnerability, incapacity and dependency as human conditions that can be admitted respectfully.

The fluidity and flexibility of the notion of *just dependency* create tension between different actors in the field of beneficence in Kayseri. Both in the media and in private conversations, a local version of the proverb ‘give a man a *fish* and you feed him for a day; teach a man to *fish* and you feed him for a lifetime’ is enthusiastically recited by businessmen, high rank local bureaucrats and even by hayırsevers who find vakıf work useless, if not harmful. Once I witnessed an outburst from Neriman when she was confronted with the same argument in a meeting of prominent townswomen. She first laughed angrily and then said, ‘Are you kidding? Who is going to learn fishing? The 80-year-old man or the widow with four small children? I would rather feed them all their lives than tell them this proverb once!’

Sennett’s (2003) proposed precaution for hindering the potential of inequality hidden in the final code of respect, ‘help others’, is to permit people to participate more actively in the conditions of their own care. What he means by this is not only encouraging independence when possible, but more importantly letting recipients reciprocate. With this assertion, Sennett invokes gift relations. In Chapter 7, I explored how the mechanism of reciprocity is actively used by vakıfçıs to express respect. The counter-gift that is offered by beneficiaries and accepted by vakıfçıs has a levelling effect. Certainly, it does not delete inequalities, nor does it finalise transactions, as it would have in a commodity exchange, but it creates a subject who *gives* out of a subject who *receives*.

Mary Douglas candidly and famously asserts that ‘there should not be any free gifts. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor’s intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient’ (1990, 1). It is this exemption (when invoked)

that gives the benefactor an upper hand, strips the other party of its capacity to be a giver, and hurts him or her for always being on the same side of an asymmetrical relationship. On the other hand, asymmetry is unavoidable and is even desirable in gift relations. Unlike market transactions, gift loathes symmetry, for it connotes calculation and contract (Young 1997). What makes gift relations potentially equitable is the interchangeability of positions in this asymmetrical reciprocity. This is why Sennett firmly asserts that ‘reciprocity is the foundation of mutual respect’ (2003, 219).

With this discussion on respect I do not intend to argue that vakıfçıs uniformly act according to these principles, reinforce the self-respect of the people they work with and make them feel respected. Vakıfçı practices are heterogeneous; they vary from person to person, between organisations and on different occasions. Ultimately, all encounters are unique, and respect, being an intersubjective phenomenon, is contingent over space and time. Moreover, vakıfçıs do not enter the field of beneficence stripped of their long-existing dispositions and moral registers. While they try to construct vakıfçı identities as just and pious persons, they have to juggle these existing references, habits and values, as well as self-expectations regarding professional behaviour. Critique of others, and to a lesser degree self-critique, is a favourite pastime among vakıfçıs and a significant way of negotiating the contradictions and juxtapositions of varying registers. Reflecting on similar contradictions he observed among youth in Egypt, Schielke argues that pious commitment is ‘a fragile form of continuous self-suggestion rather than a cumulative self-perfection’ (2009, 34). Although I agree with this statement with regard to most vakıfçıs, I can also safely argue that there are others who are approached as exemplary figures because they habituated the most desired behaviours. These very same people

have a good reputation, a solid network and significant social capital in the field of beneficence because they exhibit a level of virtuosity.

Here I use the term *virtue* in its Aristotelian understanding, as ‘excellence’. Therefore, being virtuous is both acting as a virtuoso, with full grip of the language, idioms, rituals and etiquette of the field, and also with virtue, with ethical judgement that is directed towards achievement of an inner and interpersonal goodness. Virtuosity is then about both being skilful and making situated judgements that are directed towards an ethical and existential question. It is knowing whom to call, what to say, how to interpellate others in relations of obligation, and while doing this assuring others and oneself of the quality and justness of motivations and practices. Language plays an important role in this endeavour. Being in good command of the rhetorical devices and this specific vocabulary is a vital part of virtuosity.

This language, as has become apparent throughout the thesis, is permeated with religious idioms, concepts, stories and references, but is not limited to these. It also has a hint of the vernacular, which gives speakers shortcuts in argumentation, and references to more humanitarian discourse of rights and obligations. This language provides common ground for differently positioned actors of the beneficence field, especially when interests and opinions are in conflict. For example, beneficiaries invoke this language and refer to their God-given right to the satisfaction of basic subsistence needs, while vakıfçıs refer to justice and the rights of third parties, which they are also responsible for observing. Or, some vakıfçıs make elaborate use of religious stories to convince hesitant and unenthusiastic hayırsevers of the other-worldly rewards relating to their prospective donations. A good command of this idiomatic language legitimises

claims, judgements and decisions, and therefore makes up a significant part of actors' symbolic capital.

Language and vocabulary are relevant to this thesis for one more reason. They are expressive of the imaginary signification that creates and maintains the field at the levels of institutions and individual subject formations. I have discussed this with reference to the concept and practice of *hizmet* and the institution of *waqf*. *Hizmet* provides both the paradigm and the ethos that bring together a wide variety of resources and actors. It flexibly delineates the boundaries of what is accountable, permissible, legitimate and just; and by implication it determines what is wrong, unjust or simply aberrant. In that sense, it is possible to approach *hizmet* as a theory that informs gift networks in the context of beneficence. It regulates and gives meaning to volunteering, fundraising, donating and networking. Gifts that circulate through these activities connect people and lead to lasting relationships that outlive the original transactions and related interactions.

At various points in the thesis, I have emphasised a feature of gift glimpsed between hesitant and obscure answers when my inquiry was directed towards motivations and intentions. Just as the obligation to give precedes the giving subject, *hizmet* is understood to be beyond the intentions and consciousness of the actors involved in it. The obligation lies somewhere outside the subject, whether it is formulated as indebtedness to one's home town or as a humanitarian responsibility. In either case it is not an inborn desire and decision that determines the act of giving. Moreover, both benefactors and *vakıf* workers approach *hizmet* as a gift received. Therefore, from their perspective it is something to be thankful for as much as to be proud of.

In this dissertation I focused on the appearances of organised hizmet observable within the boundaries of vakıfs. Certainly, and as I mentioned earlier, hizmet is a much larger concept than can be grasped solely by looking at this limited aspect of it. It is rich in connotations and references to multiple registers, ranging from citizenly duties to religious obligations and rewards. Therefore, it is widely used in the discourse of the powerful, by politicians, businessmen, religious leaders, and lay people alike. This richness and flexibility deserves to be studied in its various guises, but this can only be accomplished in a future project. For this study, I have had to limit my scope to hizmet organised in and around contemporary vakıfs.

Waqf is the predominant institution involved in the formation of the field of beneficence and the subjectivities of beneficence actors. It is an institutional framework and an imaginary signification at the same time. In Chapter 2, I provided a detailed account of these two aspects and illustrated the contemporary significance of both in the Turkish welfare regime. With this account I emphasised its in-between character in the eye of established social science understandings of public and private, self-interest and altruism. In Chapter 1, I discussed how social citizenship literature is stuck between the state and the market because it relies on an ontological model that approaches human beings as creatures driven by self-interest and profit maximisation. In order to control the allegedly essential qualities of men, proponents of social citizenship, as such, turn their faces to the state. They not only approach the state as the sole provider of welfare but also recognise it as the only source of legitimacy when it comes to caring for fellow citizens.

Scholars of Islamic economics clearly have a different vision, which I have briefly reviewed, as it constitutes a source of moral action in the field of beneficence. Islamic economics, with its foundational ontology that is significantly different from that of homo economicus, places gift-giving at the heart of economic action and recognizes it as an integral part of the economy, rather than as a marginal addendum. In this context, caring for fellow human beings is an injunction (however vaguely defined and open to practical interpretation) to be taken seriously. The significance given to it finds its expression in the historical institution of waqf. Waqf is a non-state institution that creates its subjects as citizens who are responsible for the welfare of others, subjects who are lawful givers and receivers with rights and entitlements. This is primarily a political and ethical formation, unlike the formal and categorical belonging commonly evoked by contemporary notions of citizenship.

Any practice intended to satisfy needs (even the most physical ones) should be approached not only as a matter of functionality directed towards survival, but also as a quest for the meaning of life, existence, and ways of being human in a society. Throughout the gradual development of this thesis I have looked for traces of this existential search within the field of welfare provision, beneficence networks and among vakıf workers. Slowly, I have carried my argument from the general schemes of political economy towards the ethical formations of subjects in their relationships with others. If there is one conclusion to draw from this quest, I would contend that welfare provision is an ethical problem that asks the question of how to live a just and meaningful life as much as it is a political one that addresses this question with reference to other people's needs.

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